



# Girls on Probation: Challenges and Outcomes

Administrative Office of the Courts  
Washington State Center for Court Research



*“If we do not maintain Justice, Justice will not maintain us”  
-Francis Bacon*

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**Washington Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)**  
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### Introduction

Although girls account for nearly 30% of arrests in the United States each year, the stereotypical juvenile delinquent for the general public and practitioners working with youth is indisputably a young male<sup>1</sup>. As a result, research, policy measures, and probation programming within the juvenile justice system have traditionally focused on delinquent boys and rarely considered girls and their problems<sup>1</sup>.

Although girls are still outnumbered by boys in the juvenile justice system, national data show that over the past two decades their share has increased at every stage of the justice process from arrest to adjudication.<sup>2</sup> For example, at the national level girls made up 23% of youth sentenced to probation in 2015, in comparison to only 15% in 1985<sup>3</sup>.

For adjudicated girls, the likelihood of being placed on formal probation also increased from 60% in 1985 to 67% in 2013<sup>4</sup>. If we add to that an increase (from 20% to 23% between 1985 and 2013) in the number of girls receiving probation in cases that were handled informally (e.g. cases that were not petitioned to the court), we will see that for the last two decades probation, in one form or the other, serves as the primary type of female juvenile treatment used by the juvenile justice system. This trend raises concerns regarding the ability of a traditionally male-oriented probation system, which has limited programming services for girls, to address the gender specific needs of girls in a developmentally appropriate manner<sup>5</sup>.

While probation-involved boys and girls share many of the same challenges and risks, some issues are particularly unique to the girls. One of the realities girls involved with probation face is a higher exposure to violence either as victims or witnesses. For example, looking specifically at the problem of victimization, it is evident that girls under probation supervision in Washington State are much more likely to witness violence at home or in the community and to be victims of violence across a number of categories, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and child neglect than their male counterparts as well as the general youth population of girls<sup>6</sup>.

**Tables 1: Exposure to Violence among Probation-Involved Girls and the General Population of Girls**

	<i>Youth on probation</i>		<i>Youth in the population</i>	
	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>
Witness violence at home	56%	42%	21%	21%
Witness violence in the community	52%	48%	25%	30%
Sexual abuse	34%	8%	11%	8%
Physical abuse	44%	31%	8%	11%
Child neglect	33%	21%	14%	15%

<sup>1</sup> Meda Chesney-Lind & Lisa Pasko (2004). *The female offender: girls, women and crime*. Sage Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Charles Puzzanchera, "Juvenile Arrests 2012" <http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/248513.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Melissa Sickmund, Anthony Sladky, & Wei Kang, "Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics: 1985-2013" <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezajcs/>.

<sup>4</sup> Juvenile Court Statistics, 2013: <http://www.ncjj.org/pdf/jcsreports/jcs2013.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Source: [Girls and the Juvenile Justice System Policy Guidance](#), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> David Finkelhor, Heather Turner, Anne Shattuck, Sherry Hamby, and Kristen Kracke, "*Children's Exposure to Violence, Crime, and Abuse: An Update*" Juvenile Justice Bulletin: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/248547.pdf>



Aside from violence, probation-involved girls are disproportionally affected by a wide range of other adverse life circumstances such as dysfunctional family environment, interpersonal problems, and conflict<sup>7</sup>. These life circumstances, although pertinent to both genders, are particularly stressful for girls because girls have been socialized from a young age to value interpersonal relations and emotional exchanges<sup>8</sup>. When faced with relational and other adversities, girls tend to experience lasting negative consequences for their health and well-being because of the ways they tend to cope with stressful events<sup>9</sup>. Research in the area of gender, stress, and emotions finds that girls, when coping with various stressors, are more likely than boys to generate strong self-directed emotions (e.g., depression, anxiety, shame, and guilt) that can lead to a variety of self-destructive behaviors (e.g., self-medication, running away from home, self-mutilating, suicide, and substance abuse)<sup>8</sup>. In contrast, boys, in response to stress, are more likely to generate outward-directed emotions (e.g., anger and hostility) that lead to outburst behaviors directed toward others<sup>10</sup>.

All these factors are more likely to cause more severe health-related effects in girls than boys. For example, girls are more likely than boys to suffer from mental health disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress syndrome, psychotic disorders, borderline personality disorders, and eating disorders) and substance use disorders,<sup>11</sup> and many suffer from both substance use disorders and mental illness. Despite this high prevalence, mental health needs of girls often go unrecognized and untreated<sup>12</sup>. Consequently, many girls who enter the juvenile justice system pose practical challenges to probation departments.

Probation officers, although knowledgeable about trauma-specific interventions, typically receive no trauma training, and often experience difficulties while working with high-needs female youth. For example, one study of probation officers in Arizona<sup>13</sup> found that probation officers often referred to girls as "harder to work with," "have too many issues," and are "too needy." Nearly all probation officers in the same study admitted they were doing "counseling work" and "talked to girls more" even though they felt uncomfortable "acting like counselors" due to lack of training.

The NCTSN National Juvenile Probation Officer Survey<sup>14</sup> revealed that although many probation officers around the country have received trauma training, many indicated wanting more training on specific trauma topics including: identifying trauma-related needs, survival strategies of traumatized youth, the impact of trauma on youth, and developing an effective case plan. Slightly more than a half of 1,747 probation officers participating in this study indicated awareness of trauma-specific interventions, but when asked to list interventions, only one-third of respondents listed common trauma-specific interventions, such as Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

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<sup>7</sup> American Bar Association & National Bar Association. (2001). *Justice by gender: The lack of appropriate prevention, diversion and treatment alternatives for girls in the justice system*. Washington, DC: American Bar Association.

<sup>8</sup> Loeber, R., & Hay, D. (1997). Key issues in the development of aggression and violence from childhood to early adulthood. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 48: 371-393.

<sup>9</sup> Matud (2004). Gender differences in stress and coping styles. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 37 (7): 1401-1415

<sup>10</sup> Mirowsky, John and Catherine E. Ross. 1995. "Sex Differences in Distress: Real or Artifact?" *American Sociological Review*. 60: 449-468.

<sup>11</sup> Timmons-Mitchell, J., Brown, C., Schulz, S. C., Webster, S. E., Underwood, L. A., & Semple, W. E. (1997). Comparing the mental health needs of female and male incarcerated juvenile delinquents. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 15, 195-202.

<sup>12</sup> Mental Health Needs of Juvenile Offenders, retrieved at <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cj/jjguidebook-mental.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Gaarder, Rodriguez & Zatz (2004): Criers, liars, and manipulators: Probation officers' views of girls, *Justice Quarterly*, 21:3, 547-578

<sup>14</sup> NCTSN National Juvenile Probation Officer Survey: [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/po\\_survey.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/po_survey.pdf)



Recognizing that the juvenile justice system in general, and probation, in particular, which are often seen as the last resort in providing care for multi-need female youth, are not adequately equipped with tools and services which can effectively address the needs of girls<sup>15</sup>, in October 2015, OJJDP released *Girls and the Juvenile Justice System Policy Guidance*<sup>16</sup>. This guidance stresses that it requires a national commitment to increase “gender and culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and developmentally appropriate approaches” and outlines what states, tribes, or local communities “can do to improve our responses to girls and young women in—or at risk of entering—the system”.<sup>16</sup>

While a few programs for girls have been created<sup>17</sup> there is a lack of long-term empirical data to validate their effectiveness. The juvenile justice system as a whole has yet to develop consistent gender-specific strategies. In the absence of well-attuned programming matching their needs, girls are provided with the services, supervision, and treatment options that were designed primarily for boys but are expected to benefit all youth. What is the impact of this “one size fits all” treatment on girls?

The answer remains largely unknown. Juvenile courts need accurate information about girls in their care to design and provide adequate service to these youth. Policymakers need this information to make informed and appropriate policy and funding decisions on behalf of girls. Local communities need this information to improve their programmatic responses to girls at the local level.

In an effort to provide this information, this report is going to be the first in a series exploring the myriad of complex needs of girls in the juvenile justice system and examining whether the system is adequately responding to them.

### Study Purpose

This study examines a group of probation-involved girls in Washington State with a focus on their characteristics, their participation in interventions, and their responses to interventions. Although many of the results for girls are presented side by side with the results for boys, the main goal of this study is to provide information regarding the unique needs of girls coming to probation.

Specific research questions are:

1. What are the challenges facing girls involved with juvenile probation and whether they are different than those of boys?
2. To what extent are girls involved with treatment and how are their completion rates different from those for boys?
3. What proportion of girls recidivate and how do their recidivism rates compare to boys?
4. Which factors are associated with recidivism among probation-involved girls?

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<sup>15</sup> United States Department of Justice. Department of Justice Activities under the Civil Rights Institutionalized Persons Act: Fiscal Year 2010; CRIPA: Washington, DC, USA, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Source: [Girls and the Juvenile Justice System Policy Guidance](#), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Sarah Cusworth Walker, Ph.D. & Ann Muno, MSW (2011) Washington state girls group evaluation.

## Key Findings

Our findings show that the girls coming to probation in Washington have strikingly different needs than boys. These needs intersect and correlate with one another resulting in multi-layered behavioral and health issues affecting the lives of girls. We also found that girls are not a homogeneous group, and there are several particularly vulnerable subgroups of girls who have unique needs and challenges. These subgroups include: 1) minority girls (especially Native American girls and African American girls); 2) girls with a history of out-of-home placement; 3) girls residing in a foster or group home while on probation; and 4) girls with a history of mental health problems. Below we briefly summarize the main findings:

- ✓ Girls entering probation are less likely than boys to have a history of violence and less likely to be involved with gangs. Prior to probation, girls were mostly committing less serious crimes (e.g., misdemeanors) or exhibiting behavior like skipping school or running away from home, which behaviors may result in a status offense, and thus, were posing a smaller risk to the community than boys.
- ✓ The families of probation-involved girls, in comparison to those of boys, are more likely to be severely dysfunctional. Close to 70% of girls had been exposed to some form of family-related trauma such as poverty, history of jail in the family, parental alcohol abuse, parental drug abuse, parental mental health issues, parental physical health problems, and family conflict (e.g., verbal intimidation, yelling, heated arguments, threats of physical abuse, and domestic violence).
- ✓ Probation-involved girls are far more likely than boys to have a history of abuse or other form of violence. Up to 78% of girls have witnessed violence at home or community and 64% experienced one or more forms of maltreatment (physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect). More than 34% have been raped, 44% have been exposed to physical violence, and 33% have been victims of neglect. In most cases of physical abuse, girls have been victimized by someone they trusted such as a family member. With the regard to sexual abuse, 42.2% were victimized by a family member and 66.4% were victimized by someone outside the family.
- ✓ We also found that girls who were exposed to one type of violence were at far greater risk of experiencing other types of violence, or being poly-victims<sup>18</sup>. If compared to boys, probation-involved girls were at a higher risk for poly-victimization. They were two times more likely than boys to be exposed to three or more types of violence or maltreatment (42% vs. 22%) and almost three times more likely than boys to experience four or more different types of violence or maltreatment (21% vs. 8%).
- ✓ Girls' higher rates of victimization might explain their higher rates of running away from home. Close to 70% have a history running away or being kicked out of home and 55% were runaways at the time of the risk assessment. Several sub-groups of girls are at a higher risk for running away from home, including 1) girls residing in a foster or group home, 2) girls with a history of out-of-home placement, 3) girls with a history of child maltreatment, and 4) girls with mental health problems.

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<sup>18</sup> Turner, H.A., Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. 2010. Poly-victimization in a national sample of children and youth. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 38(3): 323–330.



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- ✓ Girls also differ from boys in regard to their higher rates of mental health problems. More than 50% of girls had experienced at least one symptom of PTSD, 40% experienced depression or anxiety, 34% had a history of suicidal ideation, 26% have been engaged in self-mutilating behavior, and 21% have attempted to commit suicide. Despite the high rates, the mental health problems of probation-involved girls often go unrecognized and untreated. Approximately 33% to 52% of probation-involved girls in the past had symptoms of at least one diagnosable mental health disorder, yet only about 17% have been previously diagnosed with a mental health problem.
- ✓ There are two groups of girls with exacerbated mental health problems relative to the rest of probation-involved girls: 1) girls with a history of out-of-home placement and 2) girls in a foster or group home at the time of probation. Almost all of these girls have been exposed to life-altering trauma that contributed to their higher rates of suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior, self-mutilating behavior, depression or anxiety, somatic complaints, anger issues, and symptoms of PTSD.
- ✓ Compared to boys, girls on probation are far more likely to be involved with the child welfare system. About 31% of probation-involved girls have had a history of out-of-home placement, 21% had a history of dependency, and 6% were residing in a foster or group home while on probation. Out of 75 girls living in a foster or group home while under probation supervision, 54 (or 72%) have witnessed violence and 15 (or 20%) have experienced physical violence in their foster homes.
- ✓ Probation-involved girls also have higher risk for academic underachievement, school maladjustment, and dropout. They are less likely than boys to be interested in school activities or to believe that school is encouraging. Girls are more likely than boys to have low grades, and they are less likely to stay in school or graduate. Native American girls are at a particularly higher risk for dropping out than any other racial group.
- ✓ Educational problems are exacerbated among probation-involved girls who are residing in a foster or group home due to complex developmental problems. These girls, are disproportionately more likely than the rest of the probation-involved girls to have a history of special education needs, behavioral problems, ADHD, learning disabilities, and active IEP.
- ✓ Girls on probation are more likely than boys to report both past and current use of alcohol and drugs, to use more serious drugs, to develop substance abuse problems, withdrawal problems, and experience adverse outcomes of substance abuse leading to disrupted education, family conflict, and difficulty keeping pro-social friends.
- ✓ Girls found eligible for at least one evidence-based program (EBP) are more likely than boys to face barriers to treatment. They are less likely to start an EBP and, if they started treatment, they are more likely to drop out of the program. Girls are especially less likely to begin treatment if they are 1) older (17 and 18-year olds); 2) Native American 3) residing in a foster or group home while on probation; 4) living in a household below the poverty level; and 5) reporting a history of child maltreatment.



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- ✓ Girls are more likely than boys to violate conditions of probation (14% vs. 12%). Several sub-groups of girls who are at a particularly higher risk for violating conditions of probation include 1) younger girls (ages 12-14); 2) girls with a history of truant behavior; 3) girls residing in a foster or group home at the time of probation; and 4) girls with a history of mental health problems.
- ✓ Although girls are less likely to become court involved (27% of girls, compared to 73% of boys), boys and girls placed on probation are equally likely to recidivate. Sub-groups of girls at higher risk for recidivism include: 1) younger girls (14 or less); 2) girls residing in a foster or group home; 3) African American girls; and 4) girls with a history of out-of-home placement.
- ✓ Approximately 15% of probation-involved girls commit a new status offense a year after being sentenced to probation in comparison to 12% of boys. It does not come as a surprise, but girls with a history of truant behavior are at far greater risk of being petitioned to the court for a new status offense than overall probation-involved girls.

## Recommendations

- ❖ Improving outcomes for girls requires continual use of data to understand the characteristics of justice-involved youth, how the justice system responds to them, and both their near- and long-term outcomes, none of which data has been collected in Washington. It is essential to expand the data collection to facilitate monitoring, tracking, and reporting on the experiences and outcomes of probation-involved girls. It is recommended to identify common outcomes and valid methods for measuring these outcomes in the domains of family relationships, housing, education, and behavioral health.
- ❖ Use research-based trauma-focused screening instruments<sup>19</sup> to ensure that trauma-related disorders are routinely identified among youth coming to probation and that their needs are assessed. Screening for trauma history should be performed by appropriately trained staff. Most instrument developers provide guidelines for the level of training and education needed to appropriately administer the instrument.<sup>15</sup>
- ❖ Raise awareness of behavioral health issues in justice-involved populations among youth-serving professionals such as juvenile court, detention, probation, and juvenile rehabilitation personnel.
- ❖ Strengthen the training and capacity of probation managers to recognize trauma among the youth they serve. In particular, it is recommended for probation officers and community program providers to receive formal training on specific trauma-related topics:
  - Identifying trauma-related needs;
  - Survival strategies of traumatized youth;
  - The impact of trauma on youth;
  - Trauma-specific and gender-specific interventions;
  - Case planning for girls with trauma.
- ❖ Ongoing technical assistance with clinicians and health care providers should be established and maintained to enable probation managers to refer the most complicated cases involving youth in their care.
- ❖ Identify girls who have or have had contact with the child welfare system. Ensure that the case plan has an appropriate response for youth residing in a foster or group home to enhance responsiveness to treatment. Collaborate effectively with allied professionals and advocate for client services.
- ❖ Closely monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of treatment services provided to girls who are at risk for returning to the juvenile justice system, including:
  - Girls with a history of truant behavior;
  - Girls residing in a foster or group home at the time of probation;
  - Girls with a history of or current mental health problems;
  - Girls with a history of out-of-home-placement.

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<sup>19</sup> Wolpaw, J.W., & Ford, J.D. (2004). *Assessing exposure to psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress in the juvenile justice population*. National Child and Traumatic Stress Network: [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)



### Study Methodology

This study undertakes a population-based examination of first-time probationers in Washington. The study population is comprised of youth who were administered the full Washington State Juvenile Court Assessment (implemented as the Positive Achievement Change Tool, or PACT) between January 1, 2014 and December 31, 2015, and who were found eligible for one or more treatment programs that have been scientifically proven to be effective for the general juvenile offender population. In Washington, six evidence-based programs (EBPs) are classified as effective in treating juvenile delinquents:

- Aggression Replacement Training (ART)
- Coordination of Services (COS)
- Functional Family Therapy (FFT)
- Family Integrated Transitions (FIT)
- Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)
- Education and Employment Training (EET)

Eligibility for an EBP is determined by two factors: 1) risk for recidivism level as determined by the PACT assessment<sup>20</sup> and 2) whether the program is offered in the county where the youth receives services. A youth may meet the risk level eligibility criteria for an EBP (all treatment programs except COS require the youth to score at moderate or high risk for recidivism), but because the EBP is not offered where they are supervised by juvenile probation, they are not counted as eligible. That is, eligibility indicates both eligibility as determined through the assessment tool, and the availability of the EBP in the county where the youth is served.

We begin analysis with exploring the characteristics, backgrounds, experiences, and needs of probation-involved girls. We then analyze the rates of girls' participation in EBPs to sketch a profile of girls who are eligible for at least one EBP but who do not start an EBP. Finally we investigate the risk for recidivism among treatment-eligible probation-involved girls and compare it to that of boys. For this report recidivism is defined as a criminal referral to court after being found eligible for or starting an EBP treatment program. For non-starters, the recidivism clock starts at the date when eligibility for a treatment program was established, i.e., the risk assessment was completed. For youth who either completed an EBP program or who started but did not complete, recidivism monitoring begins at the EBP starting date.

In addition to recidivism, we also estimated the prevalence and the timing of the first Becca (juvenile non-offender)<sup>21</sup> petition (e.g. truancy, at-risk-youth, or child in need of services) and first probation violation subsequent to the start of the recidivism clock. When analyzing the outcomes, we do not disaggregate the results by program because the sample sizes varied considerably by program making generalizability and comparisons across programs difficult.

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<sup>20</sup> For information on the PACT assessment tool, see [http://www.assessments.com/catalog/PACT\\_Full\\_Assessment.htm](http://www.assessments.com/catalog/PACT_Full_Assessment.htm)

<sup>21</sup> The Becca Bill passed by state legislature in 1995, was designed for parents to gain assistance from the courts to support their at-risk teenagers.



### Data and Analysis

Data for this report came from two different sources: the PACT and Washington courts' Judicial Information System (JIS). Data on risk factors, both static (historical) and dynamic (current), were extracted from the PACT, which is administered periodically during a youth's time on community supervision and which provide information about criminal history, family environment, school engagement, health information as well as attitudes, thinking, and behaviors that are related to law-violating behavior.

Data about new referrals based on the offender matter<sup>22</sup> or status offense and data regarding probation violation were received from JIS, which contains information related to charges, petitions, and dispositions in Washington's courts. The study population consisted of 4,659 youth (27% of them were girls) aged between 10 and 18 years (mean age=15.4, SD=1.4).

Our analysis identifies and describes trends in the population of probation-involved girls in order to uncover hidden patterns and diagnose problems that warrant policy change or program development. Most of the descriptive research presented here is comparative—that is, it compares data between gender groups and across sub-populations of girls who are particularly vulnerable due to their increased likelihood of exposure to trauma. These vulnerable sub-populations include racial and ethnic minorities, girls with a history of out-of-home placement, girls residing in a foster or group homes while on probation, truant girls, and those with a history of mental health issues<sup>23</sup>. Tables showing full results disaggregated by gender are presented in the Appendices.

### Study Findings

Guided by a basic principle of any clinical work—and probation encompasses many elements of clinical work, such as gathering and interpreting social, personal, environmental, and health information about the client; establishing achievable treatment goals with the client; identifying appropriate resources and assessment instruments—our main goal is to understand who the client is and what she brings into the treatment setting<sup>24</sup>. Although many of the results for girls appear together with results for boys, the main goal of this study is to identify needs particularly relevant to girls coming to probation.

Our data are very clear concerning the distinguishing aspects of girls' needs arising out of their life circumstances. These needs intersect and correlate with one another resulting in multi-layered behavioral and health issues affecting the lives of girls. We also found that girls are not a homogeneous group, and there are several particularly vulnerable subgroups of girls who have unique needs and challenges due to their higher exposure to multiple traumatic events and are impacted differently by trauma. These subgroups include 1) minority girls (especially Native American and African American girls); 2) girls with a history of out-of-home placement; and 3) girls residing in a foster or group home while on probation, and 4) girls with mental health problems.

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<sup>22</sup> This does not automatically indicate that a case has been formally processed, nor does it imply the outcome of the case (deferred, diverted, dismissed, or found guilty). All of these cases are included in the study.

<sup>23</sup> The results concerning the specific vulnerable groups are not presented in the report, but are available upon request.

<sup>24</sup> Stephanie S. Covington, Barbara E. Bloom, *Women and Therapy*, Elaine Leeder, Editor, (2006) Vol. 29, No. 3/4, pp. 9-33

### *Who are the girls coming to probation in Washington State?*

Table A1 on page 31 displays the demographics for the overall study population as well as separately for boys and girls. Out of 4,659 youth selected for the study, 1,257 (or 27%) were girls. Although the majority (62.5%) of probation-involved girls in Washington are White, African-American and Native-American/Alaska Native youth are over-represented among girls on probation, compared with the general female youth population. Almost one-half (47.4%) of girls coming to probation are between 16 and 18 years old, about 41% are between 14 and 15, and the remaining 11.8% are age 13 or younger. A large portion of probation-involved girls (62%) live with their biological mother. More than one-fifth (23%) live with their biological father; while, 19% live with their non-biological father. Six girls (or 0.5%) were transient or lived on the street at the time of the assessment.

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*As with boys, minorities are overrepresented among girls on probation*

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*A larger share of girls are classified as being at a high risk for recidivism as well as having elevated needs for treatment*

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A larger share of girls than boys are identified as being at high risk for recidivating (55% vs. 48%). Besides signifying a higher risk for continuing problem behavior, these gender differences in proportions of high risk youth, as we show later in the report, indicate girls' higher need for treatment<sup>25</sup>.

### *What is the delinquency profile of girls on probation?*

Table A2 (page 32) shows that girls entering probation differ significantly from boys in terms of their offending. As seen by the age of first offense, girls' antisocial behavior is slightly delayed, but girls seem to catch up with boys around the age of 15. With regard to the type of offending, girls, prior to probation, are mostly committing less serious crimes, posing a lower risk to the community than boys. Minority girls (e.g., African-American and Native American girls), although characterized by higher rates of previous violent offending than White girls, are still being surpassed by boys' violent offending. This is consistent with past research findings indicating that violence is less prevalent in girls<sup>26</sup>. Further, gang membership, both past and present, which is shown to increase the prevalence and frequency of serious and violent crime in youth<sup>27</sup>, is less prevalent among probation-involved girls than boys.

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*Violence is less prevalent in girls on probation than in boys*

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*Probation-involved girls are at a higher risk for truant behavior*

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Another differentiating feature of probation-involved girls is a higher prevalence of truancy (55% vs. 42 % for boys). This is despite the fact that boys, in general, are either slightly more likely than girls to engage in truant behavior as suggested by national data from the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (447 truant boys vs..

<sup>25</sup> NIJ and OJJDP (National Institute of Justice and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention). 2014. *Prediction and Risk/Needs Assessment*. Justice Research. Washington, D.C.

<sup>26</sup> Tatem-Kelley, B., Huizinga, D., Thornberry, T.P., & Loeber, R. 1997. Epidemiology of Serious Violence. Bulletin. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

<sup>27</sup> Esbensen, F., and Winfree, L. T. (1998). Race and gender differences between gang and non-gang youth: Results from a multisite survey. *Justice Quarterly* 15(3): 505–526.

336 truant girls per 100,000),<sup>28</sup> or equally likely to be truant<sup>29</sup>. Our data show that approximately 1 in 1.8 girls coming to probation were truant during six months prior to that, and minority girls (e.g., African-American and Native American girls) and girls with current mental health issues are at a higher risk for habitual truant behavior.

Although girls, in general, tend to commit less serious crimes, they are more likely to receive harsher punishment than boys, if judged by their higher rates of prior detention orders (63% for girls and 61% for boys).

*Girls with child welfare involvement have higher rates of detention orders prior to probation*

Further, our findings suggest that the gendered difference is also racialized. That is, among probation-involved girls, minority girls, especially Native American girls, prior to probation, were at a particularly high risk for detention orders than any the other racial group. Another group girls who had

disproportionally higher rates of detention prior to probation, are girls residing in a foster or group home while on probation (79%).



### *What are the education problems of girls coming to probation?*

If habitual truants, in general, are at risk for school maladjustment, poor academic performance, and school dropout<sup>30</sup>, probation-involved girls, who outnumber boys in the rate of truancy (55% vs. 42%), are at particularly increased risk for school maladjustment and dropout. Table A3 (page 33), which illustrates different measures of school-related problems, indicates that girls, compared to boys, have higher rates of academic underachievement, school disengagement, and are at a higher risk for dropout despite the fact that a majority of them believe that education has value.

*Girls are at a higher risk for school maladjustment, academic underachievement and dropout*

As a general pattern, probation-involved girls, although being at a significantly lower risk for special education needs and learning disabilities, are less likely than boys to be interested in school activities, less likely to believe that school is encouraging, and more likely to have low grades. In addition, more than half of girls on probation do not feel a connection with their teachers, staff, or coaches—an important factor that has been shown to help youth at-risk to adapt academically in the face of all adversities and stressors faced by them<sup>31</sup>. All these experiences do not make probation-involved girls optimistic about their educational and personal future, and, as a result, they are more likely than boys to have low aspirations, little sense of purpose or plans for a better life, and they are less confident in

<sup>28</sup> 2001 Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement Databook statistics.

<sup>29</sup> These data are collected online (in the Truancy Reduction Application interface [TRAIN], a web-based database system housed at the National Center for School Engagement) and involve seven OJJDP federally funded demonstration programs across the US who target different populations and provide different types of interventions. Data are collected at the beginning of the intervention and at three month increments until the student leaves the truancy prevention program.

<sup>30</sup> Henry, K. L. (2007). Who's Skipping School: Characteristics of Truants in 8th and 10th Grade. *The Journal of School Health*: 77, 29-35.

<sup>31</sup> Henderson, N. & Milstein, M.M. (1996). *Resiliency in schools: Making it happen for students and educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

their ability to succeed in life. They are also less likely than boys to stay in school or graduate, and Native American girls are at a particularly high risk for dropping out than any other racial group.

Educational problems are exacerbated for probation-involved girls residing in a foster or group home due to complex developmental problems. These girls are disproportionately more likely than the rest of the probation-involved girls to have a history of special education needs, behavioral problems, ADHD, learning disabilities, and an active individualized education plan (IEP). These special vulnerabilities of girls in foster care should be taken into account when addressing the needs of multi-system girls in the juvenile justice system.

*Girls in foster care have complex educational needs*

**Table 2: Prevalence of educational problems for girls residing in a foster or group relative to all probation-involved girls**

	<i>All girls on probation</i>	<i>Girls in a foster/group home</i>
Special education needs	27%	53%
Behavioral needs	12%	28%
ADHD	7%	13%
Learning disabilities	12%	20%
Mental retardation	1%	1.3%
Active IEP	13%	31%

*Source: The PACT Full Assessment*

### *How widespread is the exposure to violence among probation-involved girls?*

One of the realities young girls face is a higher risk of violence, abuse and neglect (see Table A4 on page 34). When compared to boys, girls are more likely to witness violence either at home or in the community (78% vs. 70%) and experienced one or more forms of child maltreatment such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect (64% vs. 41%).

*Probation-involved girls have witnessed or experienced violence at a rate that substantially exceeds the rate of boys*

When different types of victimization were analyzed separately, we found that girls had higher levels of exposure to all types of victimization. They are more likely than boys to have

witnessed violence in the community (52% vs. 48%) and at home (56% vs. 42%). They are more likely to have a history of neglect (33% vs. 21%), physical abuse (44% vs. 31%), and sexual abuse (34% vs. 8%). In most cases of physical abuse, girls are victimized by someone they trusted, a family member or close family friend. With the regard to sexual abuse, 42% are victimized by a family member and 66% are victimized outside the family<sup>32</sup>.



<sup>32</sup> These two categories are not mutually exclusive.

We also found that girls who were exposed to one type of violence are at far greater risk of experiencing other types of violence, or being *poly-victims*<sup>33</sup>. For example, girls who witnessed violence at home were three times more likely to experience physical abuse and two times more likely to be a victim of neglect relative to those girls who did not witness violence at home. Further, girls who were physically abused were two times as likely to have been sexually victimized and two times as likely to have been neglected if compared to girls who were not physically abused.

If compared to boys, probation-involved girls are at a higher risk for poly-victimization. They are two times more likely than boys to be exposed to three or more types of violence or maltreatment (42% vs. 22%) and almost three times more likely than boys to experience four or more different types of violence or maltreatment (21% vs. 8%). There is considerable evidence that poly-victims are at particularly high risk for serious consequences, including substance use, health-risking behaviors, depression, and school disengagement than those who experienced victimization of a single type<sup>21</sup>. Probation-involved girls are also at a higher risk for another demonstrated long-term consequence of poly-victimization—intergenerational continuity of maltreatment, the heightened likelihood that victims will one day maltreat and abuse others<sup>34</sup>.

Exposure to violence and maltreatment is not equally distributed among probation-involved girls. The risk of witnessing violence in the community is disproportionately higher for African-American and Native-American girls relative to girls on probation overall. Native American girls are at a higher risk for physical violence and neglect than other racial groups. Out of 75 girls living in foster homes while under probation supervision, 54 (or 72%) have witnessed violence in a foster or group home, and 20% were victims of physical violence in a foster or group home.

### *What is the extent of multi-system involvement among girls on probation?*

Girls' higher rates of victimization explains the higher rates of their involvement with the child welfare system, both past and present (see Table A4, page 33).

*Probation-involved girls have higher rates of involvement with the child welfare system*

Nearly 1 in 3 (or 31.1%) of girls coming to probation in Washington have a history of out-of-home placement (including family foster care, kinship care, treatment foster care, and residential and group care) and 1 in 16 (or 6%) of girls is residing in a foster or group home while on probation. Girls living in a foster home at the time of probation are more likely to

have more risk factors than protective factors in their lives. This is reflected in a larger percent of them identified as being at a high risk for recidivating in comparison to probation-involved girls overall (68% vs. 55%). About 21% of probation-involved girls have a history of dependency, and 4.5% have been involved in cases of involuntary termination of parental rights. Native American girls were at significantly higher risk for child welfare involvement than any other racial group.



<sup>33</sup> Turner, H.A., Finkelhor, D., and Ormrod, R. 2010. Poly-victimization in a national sample of children and youth. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 38(3): 323–330.

<sup>34</sup> Thornberry TP, Henry KL. 2013. Intergenerational continuity in maltreatment. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*. 41:555–569.

## What is the family environment of girls on probation?

Girls on probation were further distinguished from boys by the levels of their exposure to dysfunctional family environment. Table A5 (page 35), that reports the prevalence of separate family-related problems, shows that disproportionately more girls than boys lack a stable home environment due to various problems, including poverty, history of jail in the family, parental alcohol abuse, parental drug abuse, parental mental health issues, parental physical health problems, and family conflict. Native American girls are at a higher risk for having a dysfunctional family environment. They are more likely than girls in other racial groups to have a history of imprisonment in the family and have a family member in jail at the time of assessment, have parents with alcohol or drug abuse, and experience family conflict.

*Probation-involved girls are faced with higher rates of family dysfunction*

Extending the theme of family dysfunction, an alarming 41% of probation-involved girls have been exposed to verbal intimidation, yelling, and heated arguments at home; 12% experienced threats of physical abuse; and 24% were exposed to domestic violence.

Perhaps the most commonly cited reason why youth run away from home is to escape a negative family environment<sup>35</sup>. Although our data do not allow us to establish this causal link, they show that more girls than boys (70% vs. 45%) have a history running away or being kicked out of home—a subpopulation known as “thrown away” youth (or “push outs”), who have been abandoned by their parents or have been told to leave their households. Also, disproportionately more girls than boys (55% vs. 34%) were runaways or kicked out of home at the time of the assessment.



Our results show that relative to all probation-involved girls, runaway behavior is more prevalent among girls who have been exposed to violence, had poorer parent-child relationship, and have mental health problems.

**Table 3: History of running away for all probation-involved girls and by subgroup**

<i>Subgroup of girls</i>	<i>History of running away or kicked out of home</i>
All probation-involved girls	70%
Girls with a history of out-home-placement	77%
Girls in a foster or group home	81%
Girls with mental health problems	72%

*Source: The PACT Full Assessment*

<sup>35</sup> Sanchez RP, Waller MW, Greene JM. Who runs? A demographic profile of runaway youth in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2006; 39:778–781.

### *What are the mental health needs of girls on probation?*

Girls also differ from boys in regard to their higher rates of mental health problems. Table A6 (page 36) documents these differences. More than half of probation-involved girls (52%) reported having a

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*Girls are at a higher risk for mental health problems*

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common symptom of PTSD (*presence of flashbacks to traumatic event*) measured by PACT versus 34.2% of boys having the same symptom. In line with previous research showing that adolescents with PTSD are liable to respond to perceived threats aggressively and unexpectedly<sup>36</sup>, probation-involved girls are more likely than boys to manifest these tendencies through primarily negative and hostile views of intentions of others (63% vs. 55%), tantrum over

small things (38% vs. 28%), high impulsivity, display of temper, violent outburst, and uncontrolled anger (58% vs. 47%). Approximately 40.1% of girls coming to probation have a history of depression or anxiety. This is twice higher than the rate for boys (21.8%). At the time of assessment, girls are twice as likely as probation-involved boys to report having a constant feeling that life is not worth living. Somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, fatigue, and stomachaches), which prevail in a great majority of individuals suffering from depression<sup>37</sup>, are also more common in probation-involved girls than boys (33% vs. 20%).

Another factor adding to the complexity of addressing the needs of probation-involved girls is the alarmingly high rates of suicidal ideation. An estimated 34% of girls coming to probation in Washington have a history of serious thoughts about suicide (versus 19% for boys), and 21% had attempted suicide, many of which attempts did not include planning. With regard to suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior during the last six months prior to the assessment, girls' rates, although significantly falling, are still higher than the rates for boys (13% of girls vs. 5% of boys had serious thoughts about suicide and 4% of girls vs. 1% of boys attempted suicide).

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*Girls have higher rates of suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior than boys*

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Along with suicidal behavior, other self-destructive behaviors are also more common among probation-involved girls than boys. For example, girls are four times more likely than boys to have a history of self-mutilating behavior (26% vs. 6%), and they were more likely to engage in self-mutilating at the time of the assessment, especially younger girls (ages 13 and younger) (9% vs. 2%).

Our data show that mental health needs of female juveniles often go unrecognized and untreated. Although approximately 33% to 52% of probation-involved girls in the past had symptoms of at least one diagnosable mental health disorder, only 17% have been previously diagnosed with a mental health problem.

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*Girls in foster care have complex mental health problems*

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There are two groups of girls with exacerbated mental health problems relative to the rest of probation-involved girls. These two groups are: girls with a history of out-of-home placement and girls in a foster or group home at the time of probation. Almost all of these girls have been exposed to life-altering trauma that contributed to the higher rates of mental health issues.

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<sup>36</sup> Underwood, L., & Washington, A. Mental Illness and Juvenile Offenders. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2016; 13, 228- 242. [Supplemental materials\Mental Illness and Juvenile Offenders.pdf](#)

<sup>37</sup> Hamilton M. Frequency of symptoms in melancholia (depressive illness). *British Journal of Psychiatry*. 1989;154:201–206

Table 4 shows that relative to the overall probation-involved girls, girls with a history of out-of-home placement and girls residing in a foster or group home have higher rates of suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior, self-mutilating behavior, depression or anxiety, somatic complaints, anger issues, and symptoms of PTSD. These girls are often caught between the juvenile justice and child welfare systems with neither system being properly equipped to identify and meet their mental health needs, as suggested by the low rate of diagnosis for mental disorders among them.

**Table 4: Prevalence of Mental Health Issues and the Rates of Diagnosed Problems**

	<i>All probation- involved girls</i>	<i>Girls with a history of out- home- placement</i>	<i>Girls in a foster or group home</i>
History of thoughts about suicide	34%	41%	43%
Has attempted suicide	21%	25%	33%
Has engaged in self-mutilating behavior	26%	34%	40%
Anger issues	48%	53%	56%
Consistent feeling of depressions/anxiety	40%	43%	53%
Flashbacks to traumatic event(s)	52%	68%	75%
Somatic complaints	33%	39%	39%
Diagnosed with mental health problem(s)	17%	20%	12%

*Source: The PACT Full Assessment*

### *How widespread is substance use among girls on probation?*

Finally, in regard to substance use, both past and present, probation-involved girls are more likely than boys to use both alcohol and drugs, use more serious drugs, develop addiction problems, and experience adverse outcomes of substance abuse leading to health problems, disrupted behavior, family conflict, and criminal behavior (Table A7, page 37). For example, 79% of probation-involved girls used alcohol and 83% used drugs a year prior to probation, compared to 67% and 77% of boys. Girls were substantially more likely than boys to report using alcohol and drugs at the time of the assessment (45% vs. 34% for alcohol and 63% vs. 56% for drugs).



Although marijuana was the most commonly used illicit substance by both sexes, a larger proportion of girls reported using marijuana at the time of the assessment if compared to boys (61% vs. 56%). After marijuana, amphetamines

(meth/speed/ecstasy) were the most commonly used drugs by girls, followed by heroin, cocaine, hallucinogens (LSD/acid/mushrooms or GHB) and other opiates. Compared to boys, girls experience a higher prevalence of problems associated with substance use, and drugs (compared to alcohol) are causing problems in a greater number of girls.

*Girls are at a higher risk for substance use and problems associated with substance abuse*

For example, more girls than boys reported that drug use is causing family conflict (38% vs. 32%), interfering with keeping pro-social friends (33% vs. 28%), disrupting education (35% vs. 29%), and contributing to their criminal behavior (22% vs. 20%).

Native American girls are at a higher risk for substance use, both past and present, and they are more likely than girls in other racial groups to experience adverse outcomes of substance abuse leading to disrupted education, family conflict, and difficulty keeping pro-social friends.

Compared to all girls on probation, girls residing in a foster or group home while on probation were less likely to use substances in the past and at the time of risk assessment. These findings are consistent with the results of the Adolescent Foster Care Survey<sup>38</sup> that has shown that during the month just prior to the survey (“past thirty day use”), substance use among fostered youth was lower relative to substance use among youth living with their parents. At least two factors can explain this pattern: 1) the provision of foster care itself (e.g., supervision, monitoring, and management) and 2) the increased use of formal alcohol and other drug treatment in response to the needs foster care youth<sup>31</sup>.

Girls with a history of out-home-placement, although similar to all probation-involved girls in regard to their past substance use, are less likely to use substances during the last 6 months prior to the risk assessment. This is likely because a higher share of them were attending a drug or alcohol treatment at the time of the assessment.

**Table 5: Prevalence of Past and Current Substance Use**

	<i>All probation-involved girls</i>	<i>Girls with a history of out-home-placement</i>	<i>Girls in a foster or group home</i>
Past use of alcohol	79%	78%	68%
Past use of drugs	83%	82%	70%
Current use of alcohol	45%	44%	36%
Current use of drugs	63%	59%	44%
Currently attending drug or alcohol treatment	23%	25%	27%

*Source: The PACT Full Assessment*

### Treatment Initiation, Continuation, and Treatment Outcomes

Girls are more likely than boys to face barriers to initiation, continuation, and completion of treatment. In particular, when compared to boys, girls were less likely to start or complete an EBP, and when started, they are more likely to drop out of the program (Table A8, page 38). The groups of girls who are at a risk for reduced treatment initiation are: 1) older girls (17-18-year olds); 2) Native American girls; 3) girls residing in a foster or group home; 4) girls in a household below the poverty level; and 5) girls with a history of child maltreatment.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-4-38.pdf>

## To What Extent are Girls Involved with Treatment?

Figure 1 displays the extent of girls' and boys' involvement with treatment. As shown, girls are less likely than boys to start or complete an EBP, and when started, they are more likely to drop out of the program.

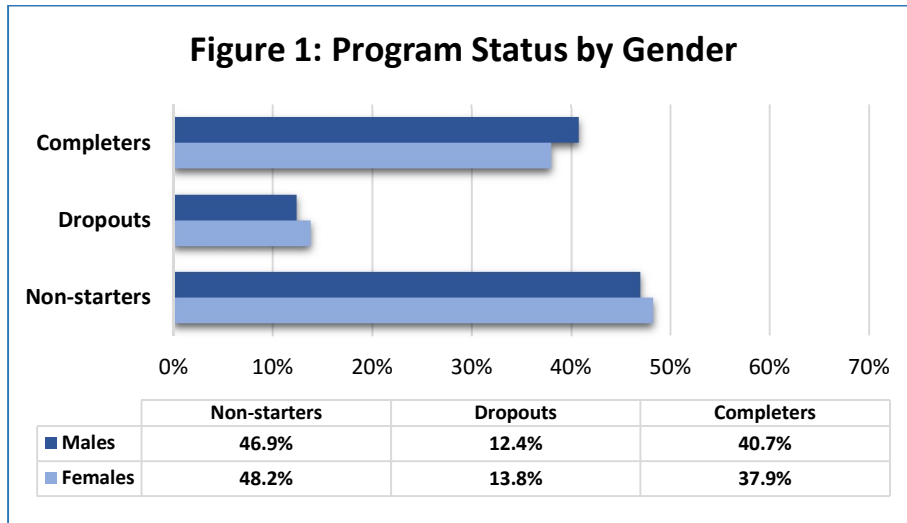


Figure 2 shows how the girls' involvement with treatment changes with age. Younger girls (ages 12-15) are more likely to start or complete an EBP(s) than older girls (ages 16-18). The likelihood of dropping out from treatment tends to increase in early childhood (between 12 and 13), peak in early adolescence (for 14-year olds) and then decline in late adolescence, by age 18.

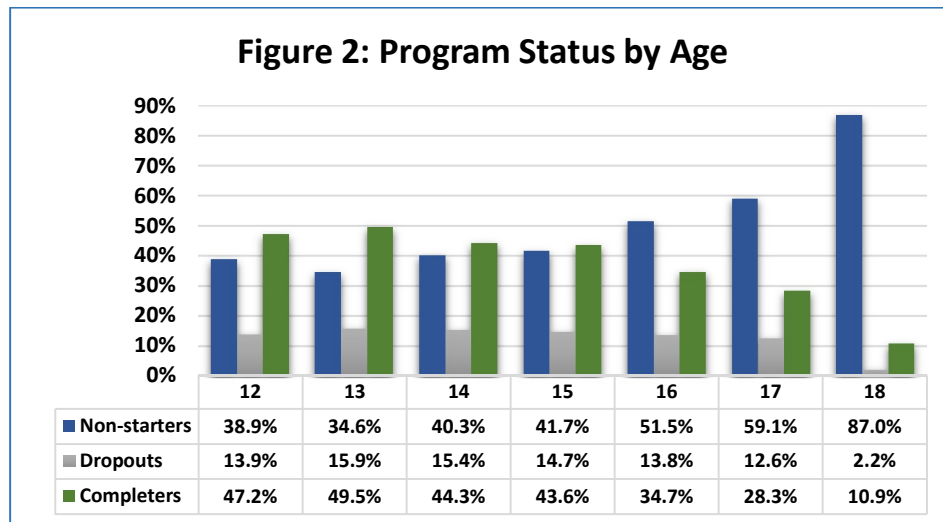


Figure 3 presents the girls' involvement with treatment for various racial and ethnic groups. As shown, relative to other racial and ethnic groups, Native American girls are far less likely to start an EBP and less likely to finish it.

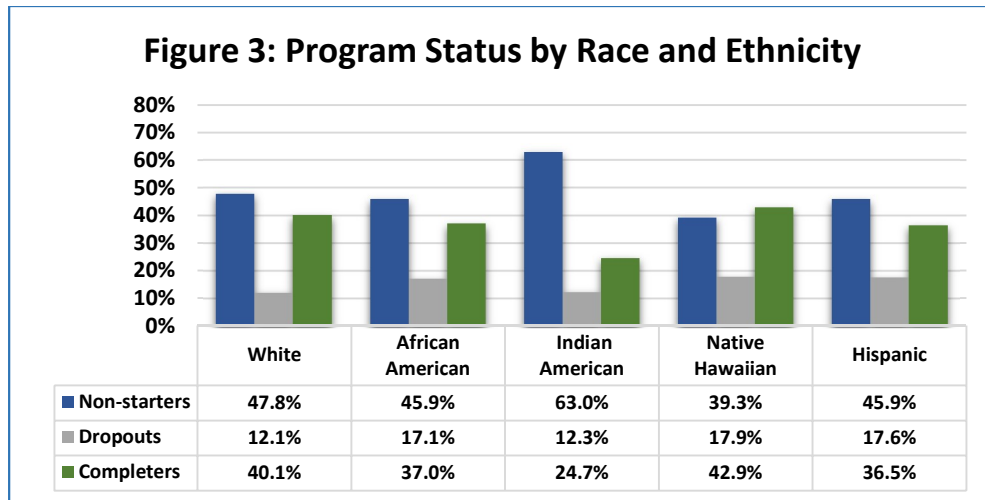
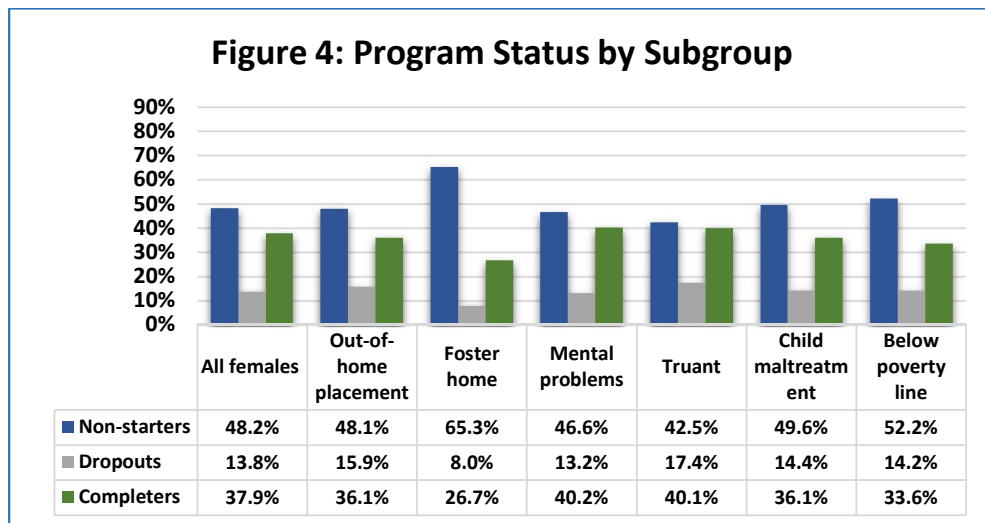


Figure 4 presents the extent of girls' involvement with treatment across several vulnerable subgroups of girls. It demonstrates that, relative to all girls, girls residing in a foster or group home, girls in a household income below poverty line, and girls with a history of child maltreatment are less likely to start an EBP and less likely to complete it.





### What is the Profile of Girls Not Starting Treatment?

It is difficult to say whether it is the absence of well-attuned gender-specific programming or involvement with other treatment (e.g., mental health treatment or drug or alcohol treatment offered by the court, a community service provider) are responsible for an alarmingly large proportion of probation-involved girls who, being eligible for at least one EBP, do not start it.

In search for possible explanation why so many eligible girls do not start an EBP, we compared the profile of non-starters with dropouts and completers and found that non-starters differ from the other two groups in a number of important ways:

- ❖ Non-starters, relative to the other two groups, consisted of a substantially higher share of low risk girls. They also included a larger percent of Native American girls, older girls, and girls residing in a foster or group home—these groups of girls, as shown earlier in this report, are less likely to start treatment.
- ❖ Another distinguishing feature of non-starters is their seemingly better adjustment to school. In particular, they are more likely than dropouts and completers to believe that education has value and that school is encouraging; they are more likely to be close to a teacher, staff, or coach; and less likely to have school conduct problems, less likely to be expelled from school, more likely to have grades above C.
- ❖ Non-starters, relative to the girls in the other two groups, are less likely to have a history of jail or imprisonment in their family and less likely to have a history of parental problems in the household (e.g., alcohol abuse, drug abuse, mental health problems, physical health problems, and employment problems). They are also more likely to feel close to a family member (e.g., mother or female caretaker, father or male caretaker, extended family).
- ❖ Although non-starters experience the same level of verbal intimidation at home as dropouts, it is less likely to escalate to real threats of physical abuse and domestic violence.
- ❖ Non-starters, compared to dropouts and completers, have higher rates of sexual abuse by someone outside the family. They also have higher rates of PTSD<sup>39</sup> (measured by “presence of flashbacks to traumatic event”).
- ❖ Non-starters, although having similar to dropouts’ and completers’ substance use rates, are more likely than the girls in the other two groups to report that alcohol or drug use (or both) has a disruptive effect on their education, causes family conflict, interferes with keeping pro-social friends, and contributes to their criminal behavior.

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<sup>39</sup>The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) (known as the DSM-IV),

## To What Extent do Probation-Involved Girls Recidivate?

Overall, boys and girls were equally likely to recidivate within eighteen months from either the start of an EBP (dropouts and completers) or the date when the risk assessment was complete (non-starters) (48.8% vs. 48.2%). Figure 5, which presents girls' and boys' recidivism rates broken down by timeframes, shows that boys' incremental recidivism rates almost mirrored girls' rates with the exception of the first two segments: during the first month, boys' recidivism rates were higher than girls'; while for the period of time between one to three months, girls' recidivism rates were higher than boys' rates.

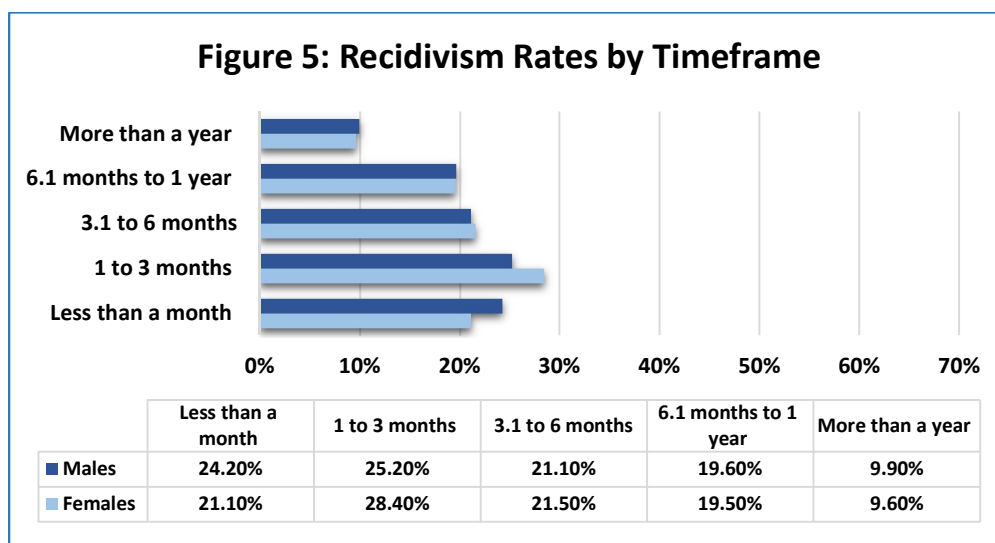


Figure 6 shows recidivism rates in youth of different ages (10 and 11-year olds are excluded due to small numbers). The general trend is that recidivism rates decrease with age. Gender differences are also changing with age: younger girls (ages 12, 13, and 14) are more likely than boys of the same age to recidivate; while older girls (ages 15 through 18) are less likely or equally likely than boys of the same age to recidivate.

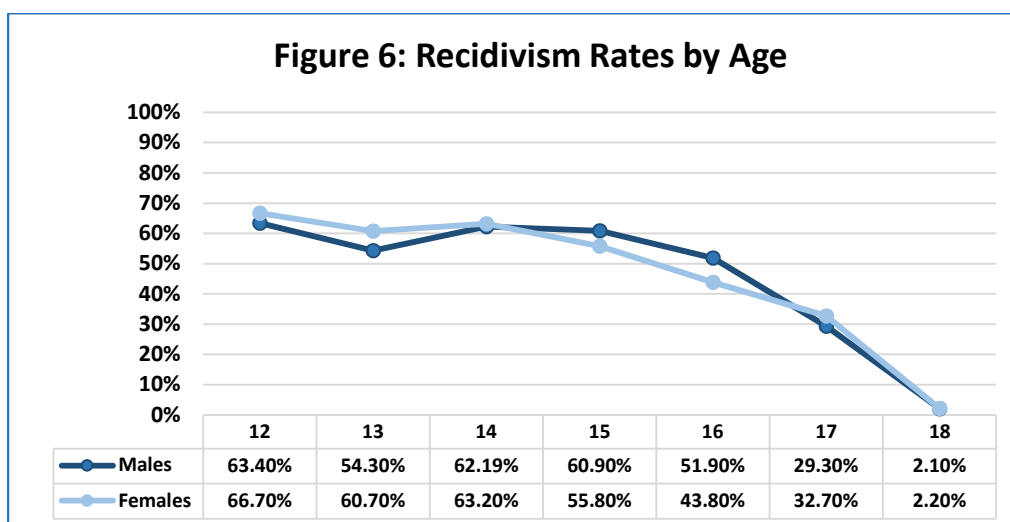


Figure 7 shows the recidivism rates in youth of different race or ethnicity. For most racial groups, girls are less likely than boys to recidivate, with an exception of African American girls who are at a particularly high risk for recidivism relative to African American boys as well as relative to girls from other racial groups.

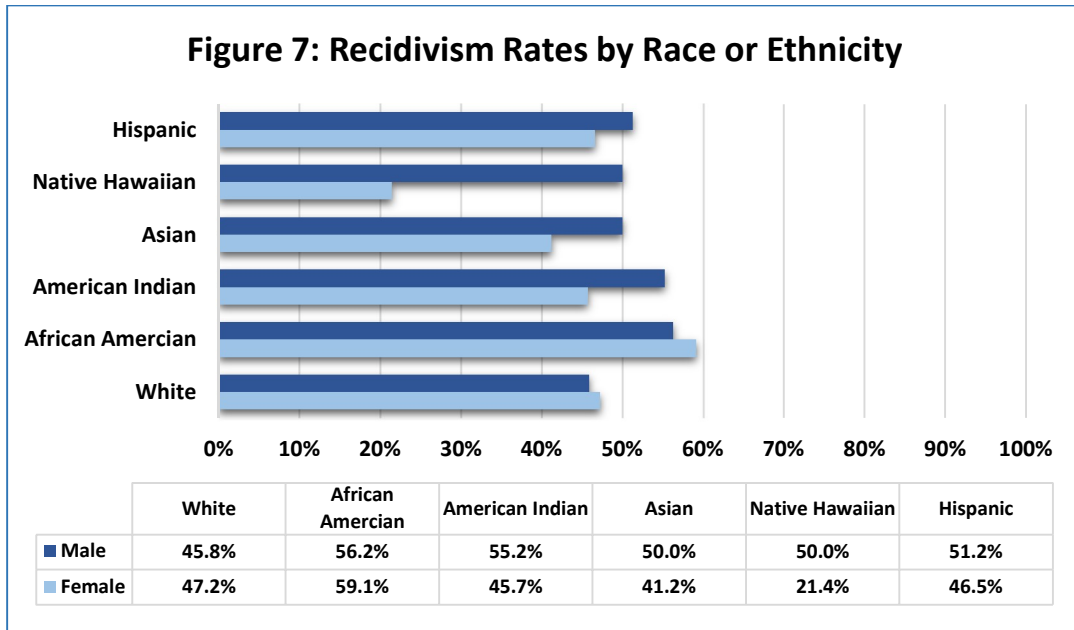


Figure 8 demonstrates that recidivism rates vary noticeably across categories of youth with different program statuses. Dropouts were disproportionately more likely to recidivate than non-starters or completers. If judged by the program exist status, boys were at a higher risk for recidivism among both dropouts and completers, while female non-starters were at a slightly higher risk for recidivism than male non-starters.

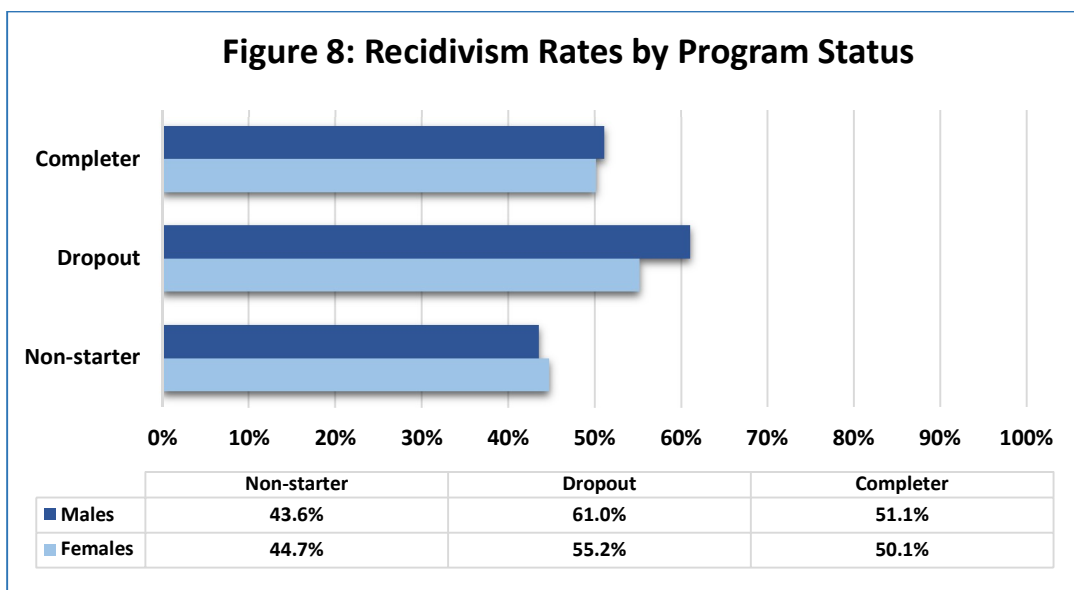
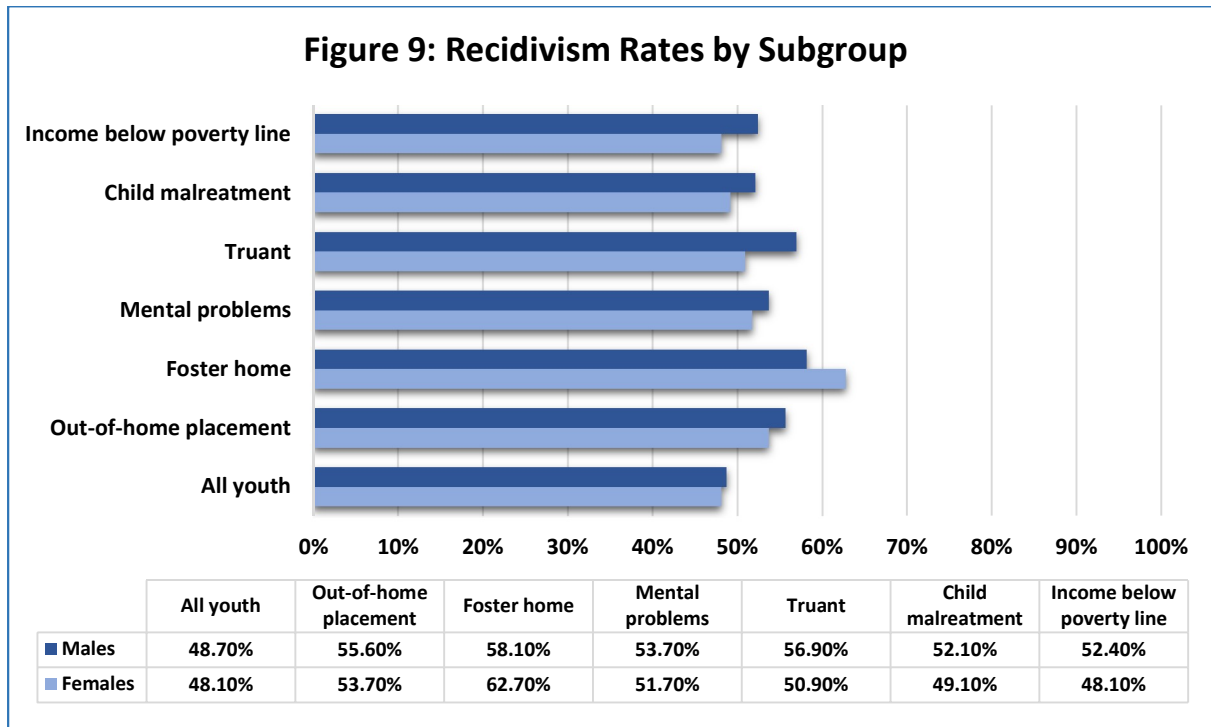


Figure 9 shows recidivism rates for all probation-involved youth, both boys and girls, as well as for several vulnerable subgroups of youth. The first important finding is that boys and girls sentenced to probation are equally likely to recidivate.

Gender differences were found when we analyzed the recidivism rates across selected vulnerable subgroups. Relative to girls, boys are more likely to recidivate in all subgroups under investigation with an exception of youth residing in a foster or group home. For this subgroup of youth, girls are at a higher risk for recidivism than boys.

Among probation-involved girls, three subgroups of girls are at particularly high risk for recidivism: 1) girls in a foster or group home, 2) girls with a history of out-of-home placement, and 3) girls with a history of mental problems. *If the juvenile justice system is to be successful in treating these girls, it is necessary to better understand and address the link between trauma, mental health, and delinquent behavior.*



### To What Extent Do Probation-Involved Girls Commit a New Status Offense?

Overall, girls (14.4%) are more likely than boys (11.7%) to commit a new status offense within eighteen months from either the start of an EBP (dropouts and completers) or date when the risk assessment was complete (non-starters). Figure 10 shows that girls are more likely than boys to commit a new status offense during the first six months, while boys are more likely than girls to commit a new status offense after the first six months.

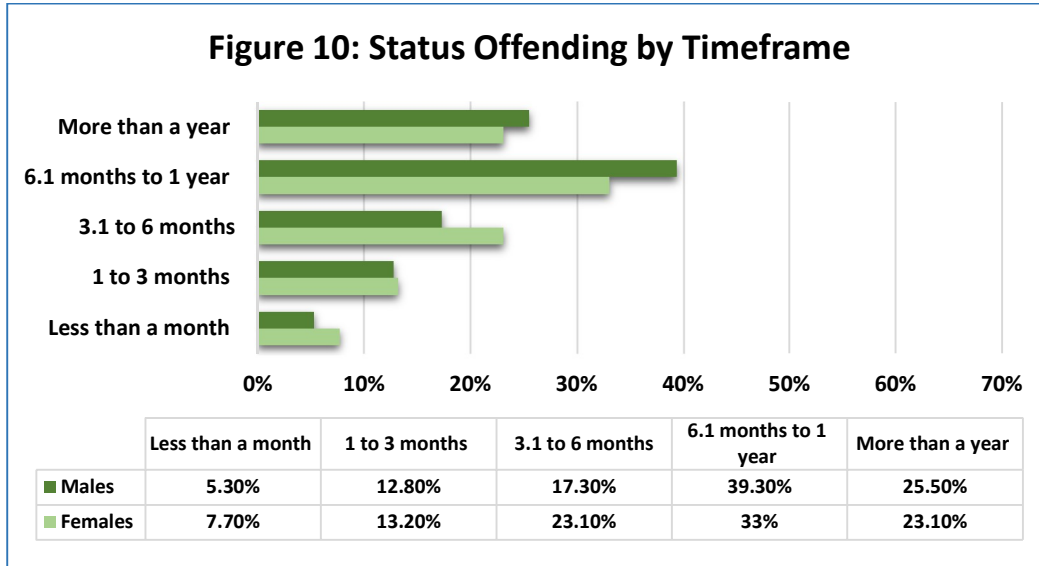


Figure 11 shows status offending rates in youth of different ages. The general trend is that status offending rates pick at the age of 14, and then decrease with age. Gender differences are also changing with age. Girls at the age of 14 are at particularly higher risk for committing a new status offense relative to boys of the same or any other age.

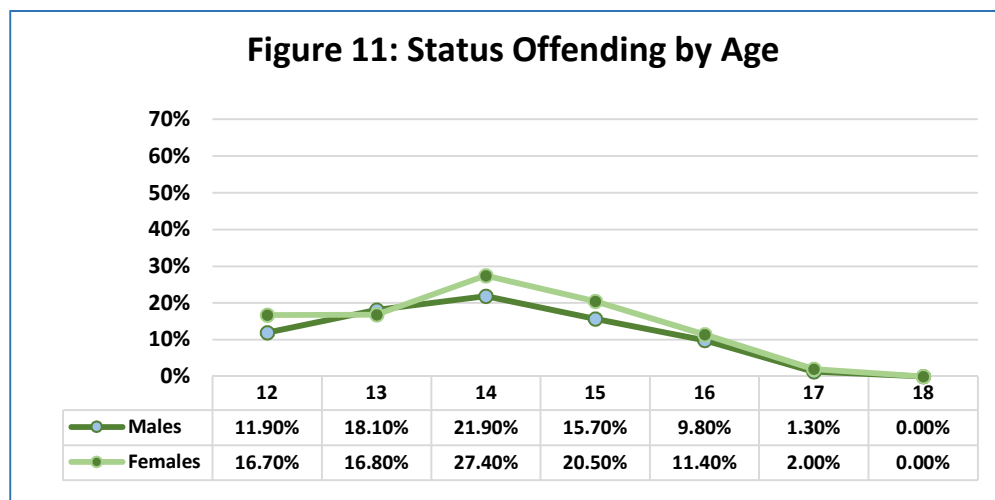


Figure 12, which presents status offending rates across different racial or ethnic groups, shows that girls are more likely than boys to commit a new status offense among White, African American, and Hispanic youth. Native Hawaiian, Asian, and American Indian girls are at a lower risk for committing a new status offense than their male counterparts.

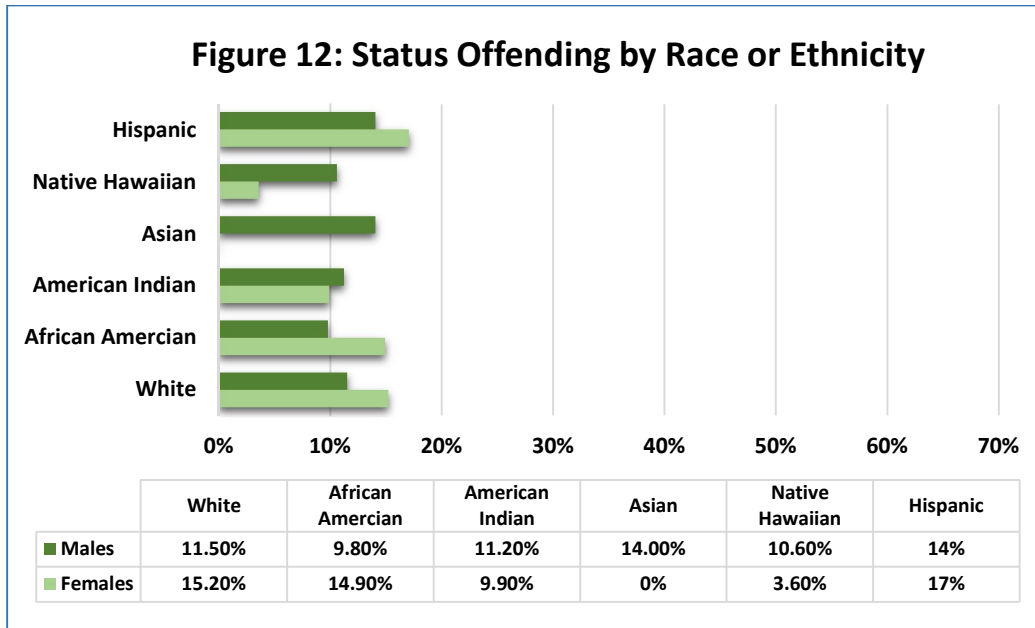


Figure 13 shows the status offending for youth with different program statuses. If viewed by the program status, male dropouts were at a higher risk for a new status offense than female dropouts, while female non-starters and completers were at a higher risk for a new status offense than boys with the same program statuses.

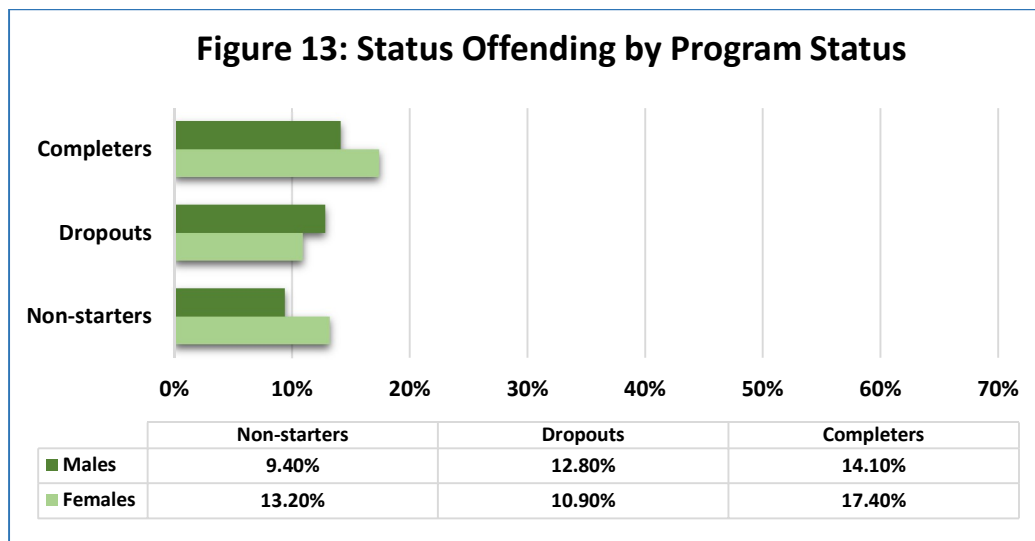
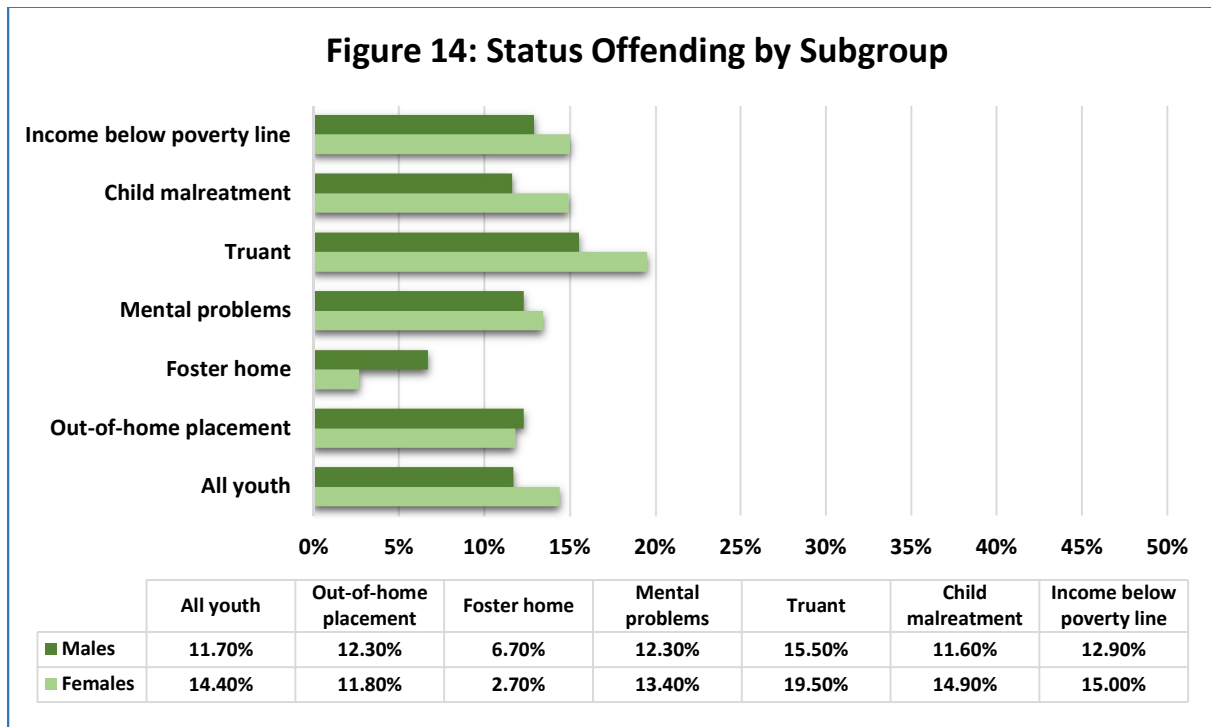


Figure 14 shows status offending rates across several vulnerable subgroups of boys and girls in relation to the rate for all probation-involved boys and girls. As shown, girls in foster or group homes are at a particularly low risk for new status while girls with a history of truant behavior are at a particularly high risk for a new status offense.



## To What Extent Do Probation-Involved Girls Violate Probation?

Figure 15 shows that overall, girls (13.8%) were slightly more likely than boys (12.3%) to violate probation at least once within eighteen months from either the start of an EBP (dropouts and completers) or the date when the risk assessment was complete (non-starters). During the first three months, boys and girls are equally likely to violate probation (34.2% vs. 35%) (). If we take the first six months as a timeframe, boys become more likely than girls to violate probation (59% vs. 55%).

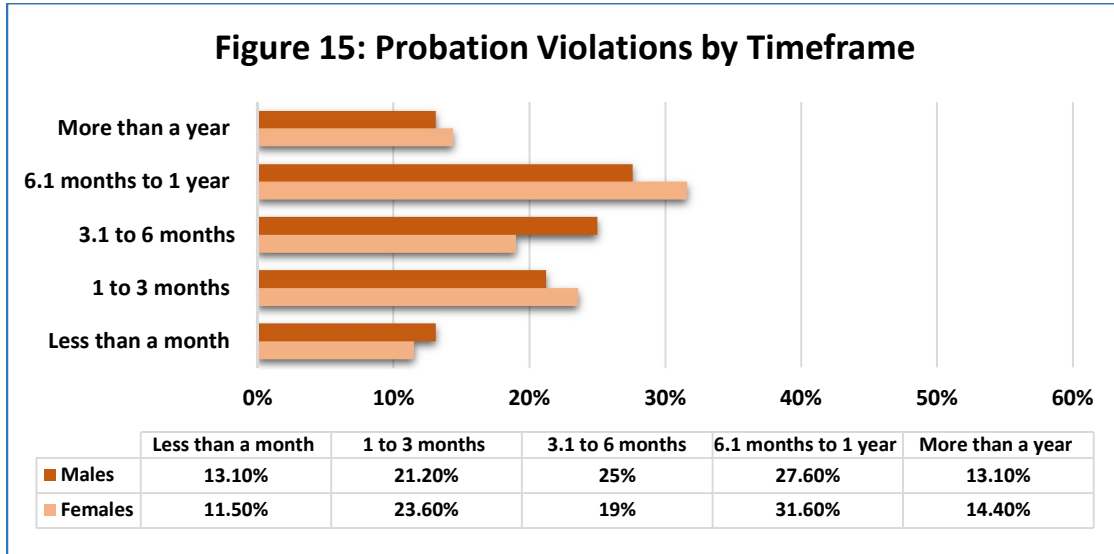


Figure 16 shows probation violation rates in youth of different ages. The general trend is that the prevalence of probation violations decreases with age. Gender differences are also changing with age: younger girls (age 12 through 15) are more likely than younger boys to violate probation; while older girls (age 16 through 18) are either less likely or equally likely to violate probation in relation to older boys.

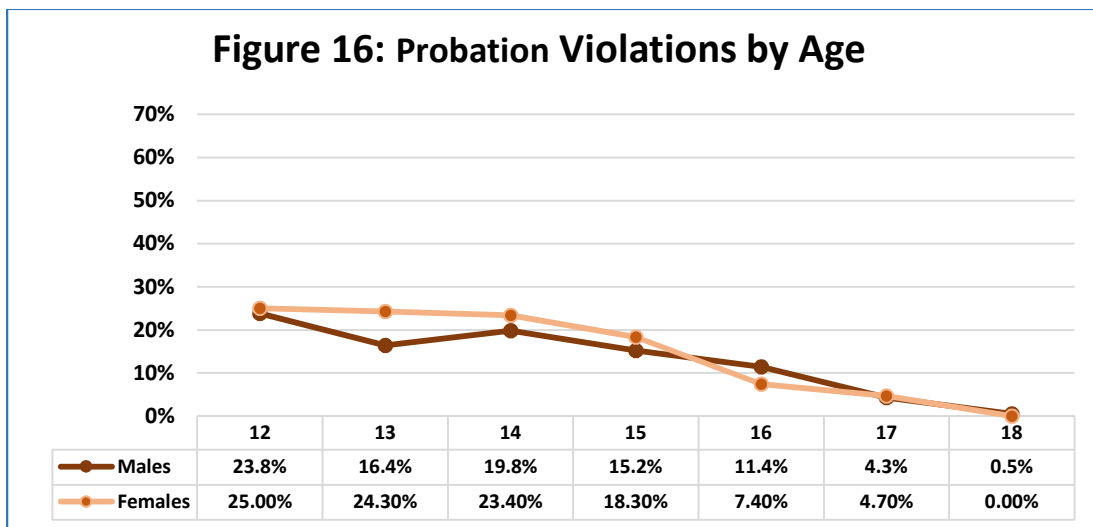


Figure 17 shows the probation violation rates in youth of different race or ethnicity (Asian and Native Hawaiian youths are not shown due to small numbers). For most racial groups, girls are either more likely (e.g., White youth) or equally likely (e.g., African American and American Indian youth) as boys to violate probation. For Hispanic youth, girls are less likely to violate probation than their male counterparts.

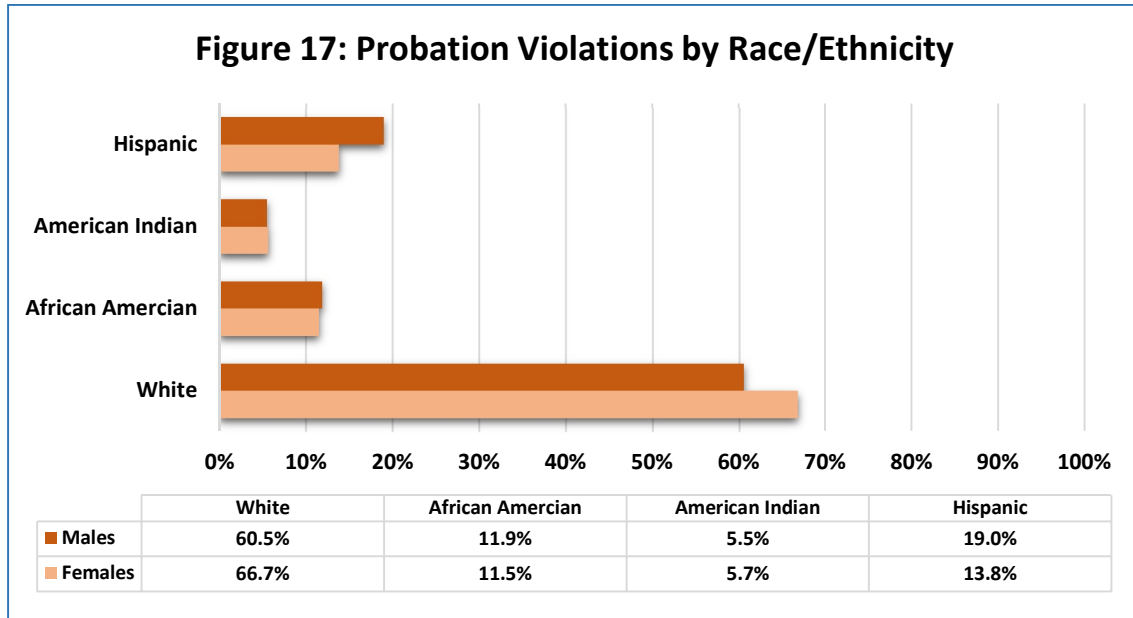


Figure 18 shows that completers (both boys and girls) are at a higher risk for probation violations than dropouts or non-starters. If broken out by the program status, boys were at a higher risk for recidivism among both dropouts and completers, while female non-starters are at greater risk for probation violations than male non-starters.

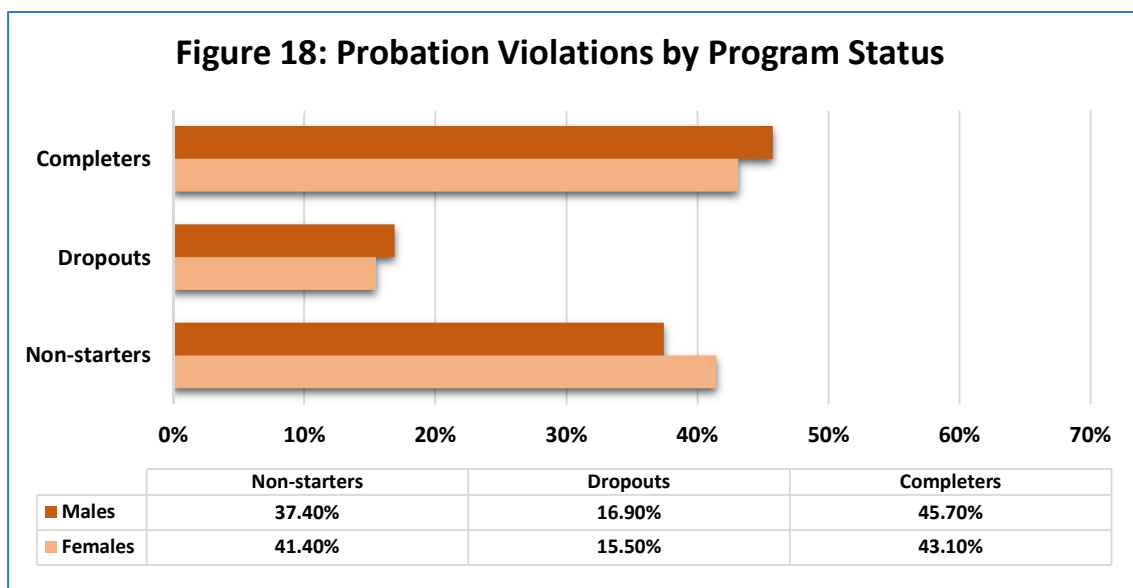
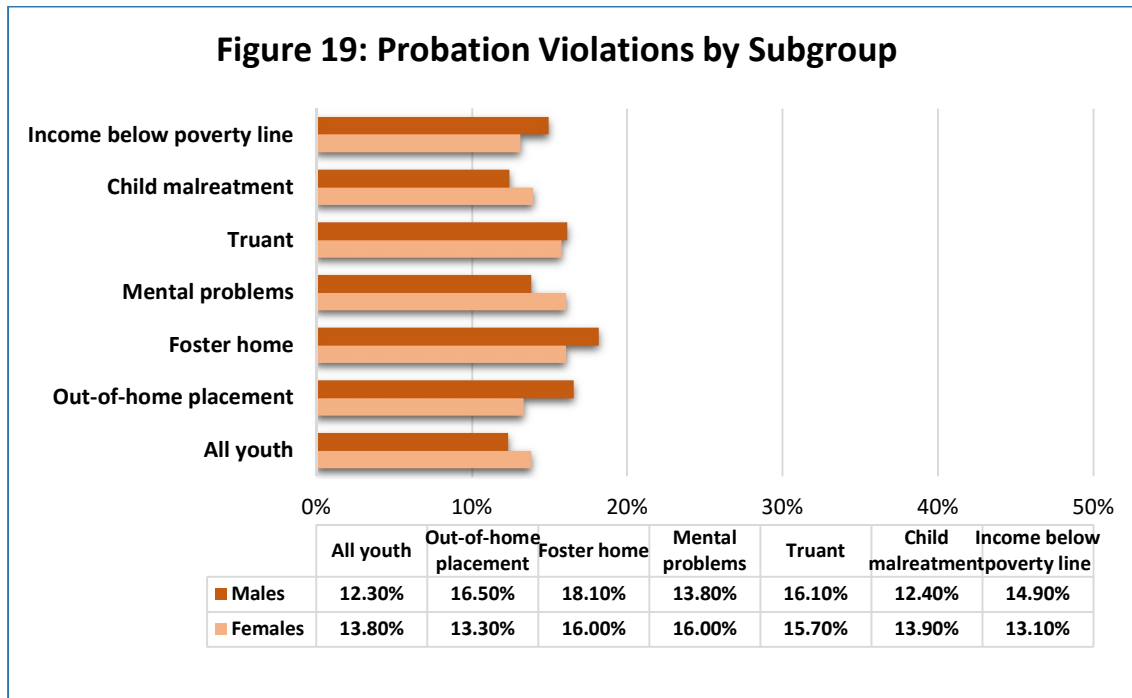


Figure 19 shows probation violation rates across several vulnerable subgroups of youth in relation to the probation violation rates for all probation-involved girls and boys. Relative to girls, boys are more likely to violate probation in all subgroups under investigation with an exception of youth with a history of child maltreatment and youth with a history of mental problems. For youth in these two groups, girls are at a higher risk for probation violations than boys.

Relative to all probation-involved girls, girls residing in a foster or group home, girls with mental health problems, and girls with a history of truant behavior are at a higher risk for violating probation.



### Concluding remarks

Girls account for only about 27% of probation-involved youth, but they present a unique challenge for the juvenile justice system because of a number of interrelated risk factors, including histories of sexual and physical violence, trauma, mental health issues, educational failure, household instability, poverty, and substance abuse. Without appropriate behavioral health services, many first-time probation-involved girls, as we show in this report, wind up tangled in the justice system. Traumatizing as it is for girls who have suffered trauma, involvement with the juvenile justice system potentially can exacerbate the existing problems that caused them to get involved in high-risk behaviors in the first place. Treatment options for girls must focus on addressing these needs. This includes knowing how to effectively deal with violence and conflict in their lives, and how to cope with stress in non-delinquent ways.





## **Appendices**

## RESULTS

**Table A1: Demographics and living arrangements for overall sample, boys and girls**

	<b>Boys (n= 3,402)</b>		<b>Girls (n=1,257)</b>		<b>TOTAL (n=4,659)</b>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Race</b>						
Other	21	0.6%	5	0.4%	26	0.6%
White	2,062	60.6%	786	62.5%	2,848	61.1%
Black/African American	500	14.7%	181	14.4%	681	14.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	125	3.7%	81	6.4%	206	4.4%
Asian	50	1.5%	17	1.4%	67	1.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	66	1.9%	28	2.2%	94	2.0%
Hispanic/Latino	578	17%	169	12.6%	737	15.8%
<b>Risk Level</b>						
Low	380	11.2%	107	8.5%	487	10.5%
Moderate	1391	40.9%	452	36%	1,843	39.6%
High	1,631	47.9%	698	55.5%	2,329	50%
<b>Age during Assessment</b>						
13 or Less	423	12.4%	147	11.7%	570	12.2%
14-15	1315	38.7%	513	40.8%	1828	39.2%
16-18	1,664	48.8%	597	47.4%	2,261	48.5%
<b>Living Arrangement</b>						
Biological mother	2,180	64.1%	780	62.1%	2,960	63.5%
Biological father	1,043	30.7%	292	23.2%	1,335	28.7%
Non-biological mother	398	11.7%	135	10.7%	533	11.4%
Non-biological father	671	19.7%	246	19.6%	917	19.7%
Grandparents	457	13.4%	165	13.1%	622	13.4%
Other relative	344	10.1%	120	9.5%	464	10%
Minor's child	5	0.1%	15	1.2%	20	0.4%
Foster/group home	105	3.1%	75	6%	180	3.9%
Transient (street/incarcerated)	13	0.4%	6	0.5%	19	0.4%

**Table A2: Delinquent history for overall sample, boys and girls**

	<b>Boys (n= 3,402)</b>		<b>Girls (n=1,257)</b>		<b>TOTAL (n=4,659)</b>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Criminal history</b>						
Misdemeanor referrals (None or one)	1,778	52.3%	590	46.9%	2,368	50.8%
Two or more	1,624	47.7%	667	53.1%	2,291	49.2%
Felony referrals	1,698	49.9%	401	31.9%	2,099	45.1%
Weapons/firearms referrals	307	9.0%	36	2.9%	343	7.4%
Against-person misdemeanor	1,280	37.6%	594	47.3%	1,874	40.2%
Against-person felonies	731	21.5%	171	13.6%	902	19.4%
Sexual misconduct misdemeanor	117	3.5%	9	0.7%	126	2.7%
Sexual misconduct felonies	227	6.7%	7	0.6%	234	5.0%
Detention orders	3,402	61.2%	798	63.5%	2,881	61.8%
Habitual truant	1,261	42.4%	586	54.8%	1,847	45.7%
Being a gang member/associate	560	16.5%	177	14.1%	737	15.8%
<b>Age at first offense</b>						
13 or less	536	15.8%	162	12.9%	698	15%
13-14 years old	1,468	43.2 %	522	41.5%	1,990	42.7%
15 years old	727	21.4%	320	25.5%	1,047	22.5%
16 years old	443	13%	175	13.9%	618	13.3%
Over 16	228	6.7%	78	6.2%	306	6.6%

**Table A3: History of special education needs, current school enrollment, school disengagement, academic performance, and academic prospects**

	<b>Boys (n= 3,402)</b>		<b>Girls (n=1,257)</b>		<b>TOTAL (n=4,659)</b>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Special education needs</b>						
Special education needs	1,316	38.7%	346	27.5%	1,662	35.7%
Behavioral	669	19.7%	148	11.8%	817	17.5%
ADHD	436	12.8%	86	6.8%	522	11.2%
Learning disabilities	639	18.8%	147	11.7%	786	16.9%
Mental retardation	18	0.5%	10	0.8%	28	0.6%
Has an active IEP	640	18.8%	164	13.0%	804	17.3%
<b>Current School Enrollment</b>						
Suspended	90	3.0%	23	2.1%	113	2.8%
Expelled	89	3.0%	16	1.5%	105	2.6%
Dropped out	85	2.9%	37	3.5%	122	3.0%
Enrolled full-time	2,348	78.9%	839	78.4%	3,187	78.8%
Enrolled part-time	339	11.4%	145	13.6%	484	12.0%
<b>Current school disengagement</b>						
Believes getting an education is of value	2,598	87.3%	938	87.7%	3,536	87.4%
Believes school is encouraging	2,154	72.4%	736	68.8%	2,890	71.4%
Not close to any teachers, staff, or coaches	1,564	52.6%	565	52.8%	2,129	52.6%
Not interested in school activities	1,406	47.2%	556	52.0%	1,962	48.5%
Full-day unexcused absences/habitual truant	1,261	42.4%	586	54.8%	1,847	45.7%
<b>Grades</b>						
Below 1.0 (some Ds and mostly Fs)	872	29.3%	333	31.1%	1,205	29.8%
1.0 to 2.0 (mostly Cs and Ds, some Fs)	1,139	38.3%	369	34.5%	1,508	37.3%
2.0 to 3.0 (mostly Bs and Cs, no Fs)	748	25.1%	294	27.5%	1,042	25.8%
Above 3.0 (mostly As and Bs)	192	6.5%	64	6.0%	256	6.3%
Honor student (mostly As)	25	0.8%	10	0.9%	35	0.9%
<b>Academic prospects</b>						
Not very likely to stay and graduate	2,085	70.1%	798	74.6%	2,883	71.3%
Believe that he/she will be successful	1,902	55.9%	637	50.7%	2,539	54.5%
Low aspirations/ little sense of purpose or plans for better life	1,215	35.7%	505	40.2%	1,720	36.9%

**Table A4: Prevalence of victimization and child welfare involvement**

	Boys (n= 3,402)		Girls (n=1,257)		TOTAL (n=4,659)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>All violence and child maltreatment</b>						
Physical abuse/sexual abuse	1,123	33%	693	55.1%	1,816	39%
Physical violence/sexual abuse/neglect	1,391	40.9%	801	63.7%	2,192	47%
<b>Physical violence/abuse</b>						
Victim of violence/physical abuse	1048	30.8%	558	44.4%	1606	34.5%
Victimized by family member	540	15.9%	267	21.2%	807	17.3%
Victimized by someone outside the family	297	8.7%	208	16.5%	505	10.8%
Victimized at home	674	19.8%	357	28.4%	1031	22.1%
Victimized in a foster/group home	37	1.1%	16	1.3%	53	1.1%
Attacked with a weapon	91	2.7%	17	1.4%	108	2.3%
<b>Witnessing violence</b>						
Has witnessed violence at home/community	2382	70%	985	78.4%	3367	72.3%
Has witnessed violence at home	1,422	41.8%	702	55.8%	2,124	45.6%
Has witnessed violence in a foster home	64	1.9%	54	4.3%	118	2.5%
Has witnessed violence in the community	1,623	47.7%	651	51.8%	2,274	48.8%
Family member killed as a result of violence	56	1.6%	14	1.1%	70	1.5%
<b>Sexual abuse</b>						
Victim of sexual abuse/rape	269	7.9%	433	34.4%	702	15.1%
Victimized by family member	150	4.4%	183	14.6%	333	7.1%
Victimized by someone outside the family	133	3.9%	288	22.9%	421	9.0%
<b>Neglect</b>						
Victim of neglect	723	21.3%	420	33.4%	1,143	24.5%
<b>Polyvictimization</b>						
2 types of victimizations or more	1,471	43%	815	65%	2,286	49%
3 types of victimization or more	764	22%	527	42%	1,291	28%
4 type of victimization or more	267	8%	258	21%	525	11%
<b>Child welfare involvement</b>						
Dependency petitions	451	13.3%	261	20.8%	712	15.3%
Foster home	105	3.1%	75	6.0%	180	3.9%
History out-home placement	707	20.8%	391	31.1%	1,098	23.6%
Termination of parental rights (ever)	105	3.1%	56	4.5%	161	3.5%

**Table A5: History of family dysfunction, family conflict, and domestic violence**

	<b>Boys (n= 3,402)</b>		<b>Girls (n=1,257)</b>		<b>TOTAL (n=4,659)</b>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Family dysfunction</b>						
Jail/imprisonment history in family	1,997	58.7%	849	67.5%	2,846	61.1%
Either one or both parents	1,785	52.5%	765	60.9%	2,550	54.7%
Mother/female caretaker	981	28.8%	505	40.2%	1,486	31.9%
Father/male caretaker	1,452	42.7%	586	46.6%	2,038	43.7%
Older sibling	446	13.1%	192	15.3%	638	13.7%
Younger sibling	63	1.9%	37	2.9%	100	2.1%
Other member	211	6.2%	112	8.9%	323	6.9%
Below poverty line	847	24.9%	360	28.6%	1,207	25.9%
Problem history of parents in household	1691	49.7%	744	59.2%	2435	52.3%
Parental alcohol abuse history	818	24.0%	379	30.2%	1197	25.7%
Parental drug abuse history	730	21.5%	352	28.0%	1082	23.2%
Parental mental health problem history	497	14.6%	278	22.1%	775	16.6%
Parental physical health problem history	518	15.2%	213	16.9%	731	15.7%
Parental employment problem history	731	21.5%	314	25.0%	1045	22.4%
<b>Family conflict</b>						
Family Conflict	2,196	65.4%	946	76.9%	3,142	68.5%
Verbal intimidation, yelling, arguments	1,296	38.6%	499	40.6%	1,795	39.1%
Threats of physical abuse	306	9.1%	147	12.0%	453	9.9%
Domestic violence: physical/sexual abuse	594	17.7%	300	24.4%	894	19.5%
History of running away /kicked out of home	1,528	44.9%	879	69.9%	2,407	51.7%
Has/currently on runaway/kicked out of home	1,136	33.8%	671	54.6%	1,807	39.4%
<b>Living alone</b>						
Transient (street/incarcerated)	13	0.4%	6	0.5%	19	0.4%
Living alone/peers/ no adult supervision	45	1.3%	27	2.1%	72	1.5%

**Table A6: History of mental health problems, current mental problems, and attending mental health treatment**

	<b>Boys (n= 3,402)</b>		<b>Girls (n=1,257)</b>		<b>TOTAL (n=4,659)</b>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>History of mental health problems</b>						
Serious thoughts about suicide	648	19.0%	422	33.6%	1070	23.0%
Has made a plan to commit suicide	129	3.8%	103	8.2%	232	5.0%
Has attempted to commit suicide	180	5.3%	268	21.3%	448	9.6%
Has felt life is not worth living	304	8.9%	219	17.4%	523	11.2%
Knew someone well who has committed suicide	97	2.9%	53	4.2%	150	3.2%
Has engaged in self-mutilating behavior	198	5.8%	325	25.9%	523	11.2%
Diagnosed with mental health problem(s)	451	13.3%	213	16.9%	664	14.3%
Consistent feelings of depression/anxiety	741	21.8%	504	40.1%	1245	26.7%
Somatic complaints	687	20.2%	418	33.3%	1105	23.7%
Presence/flashbacks to traumatic event	1165	34.2%	651	51.8%	1816	39.0%
<b>Current mental health problems</b>						
Current mental health problem(s)	1,041	30.6%	567	45.1%	1608	34.5%
Attending mental health treatment	441	42.4%	258	45.5%	699	43.5%
Currently taking medication	361	34.7%	227	40.0%	588	36.6%
Has serious thoughts about suicide	171	5.0%	160	12.7%	331	7.1%
Has recently made a plan to commit suicide	38	1.1%	27	2.1%	65	1.4%
Has recently attempted to commit suicide	32	0.9%	49	3.9%	81	1.7%
Feels life is not worth living	74	2.2%	58	4.6%	132	2.8%
Engages in self-mutilating behavior	72	2.1%	116	9.2%	188	4.0%
<b>Aggression</b>						
Gets upset over small things/temper tantrums	971	28.5%	474	37.7%	1,445	31%
Primarily negative/hostile view of others	1,867	54.9%	794	63.2%	2,661	57.1%
Believes verbal aggression is appropriate	2,547	74.9%	1,054	83.9%	3,601	77.3%
Believes physical aggression is appropriate	1,795	52.8%	758	60.3%	2,553	54.8%
Violent outbursts/ temper/uncontrolled anger	1,586	46.6%	725	57.7%	2,311	49.6%
Deliberately inflicting physical pain	574	16.9%	269	21.4%	843	18.1%

**Table A7: Past and current alcohol and drug use, and prevalence of adverse outcomes of substance use**

	Boys (n= 3,402)		Girls (n=1,257)		TOTAL (n=4,659)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>History of substance use</b>						
Past use of alcohol	2,333	68.6%	992	78.9%	3,325	71.4%
Alcohol disrupted education	605	17.8%	301	23.9%	906	19.4%
Alcohol caused family conflict	767	22.5%	385	30.6%	1,152	24.7%
Alcohol interfered w/keeping pro-social friends	662	19.5%	332	26.4%	994	21.3%
Alcohol contributed to criminal behavior	542	15.9%	251	20.0%	793	17.0%
Past use of drugs	2,619	77.0%	1,048	83.4%	3,667	78.7%
Drugs disrupted education	1,248	36.7%	515	41.0%	1,763	37.8%
Drugs caused family conflict	1,292	38.0%	544	43.3%	1,836	39.4%
Drugs interfered with keeping pro-social friends	1,096	32.2%	476	37.9%	1,572	33.7%
Drugs contributed to criminal behavior	806	23.7%	323	25.7%	1,129	24.2%
Diagnosed as abuse	488	14.3%	163	13.0%	651	14.0%
Diagnosed as dependent/addicted	527	15.5%	264	21.0%	791	17.0%
<b>Current substance use</b>						
Current use of alcohol	1,172	34.5%	567	45.1%	1,739	37.3%
Alcohol disrupting education	361	10.6%	191	15.2%	552	11.8%
Alcohol causing family conflict	517	15.2%	267	21.2%	784	16.8%
Alcohol interfering w/keeping pro-social friends	442	13.0%	217	17.3%	659	14.1%
Alcohol contributing to criminal behavior	378	11.1%	181	14.4%	559	12.0%
Current use of drugs	1,922	56.5%	793	63.1%	2,715	58.3%
Marijuana/Hashish	1,908	56.1%	769	61.2%	2,677	57.5%
Amphetamines (Meth/Speed/Ecstasy)	195	5.7%	197	15.7%	392	8.4%
Cocaine (Coke)	74	2.2%	55	4.4%	129	2.8%
Heroin	47	1.4%	72	5.7%	119	2.6%
Hallucinogens (LSD/Acid/Mushrooms/GHB)	77	2.3%	43	3.4%	120	2.6%
Opiates (Dilaudid/Demerol/Percodan/Codeine)	79	2.3%	51	4.1%	130	2.8%
Inhalants (Glue/Gasoline)	19	0.6%	18	1.4%	37	0.8%
Drugs disrupting education	987	29.0%	437	34.8%	1,424	30.6%
Drugs causing family conflict	1,081	31.8%	475	37.8%	1,556	33.4%
Drugs interfering w/keeping pro-social friends	940	27.6%	418	33.3%	1,358	29.1%
Drugs contributing to criminal behavior	675	19.8%	280	22.3%	955	20.5%

**Table A8: Treatment eligibility and program participation**

	Boys (n= 3,402)		Girls (n=1,257)		TOTAL (n=4,659)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Treatment eligibility</b>						
WSART	2,911	85.6%	1,107	88.1%	4,018	86.2%
COS	638	18.8%	199	15.8%	837	18%
EET	427	12.6%	146	11.6%	573	12.3%
FFT	2,326	68.4%	964	76.7%	3,290	70.6%
FIT	144	2.4%	72	5.7%	216	4.6%
MST	326	9.6%	117	9.3%	443	9.5%
<b>Program participation</b>						
Non-starter	1,595	46.9%	606	48.2%	2,201	47.2%
Starter/drop-out	421	12.4%	174	13.8%	595	12.8%
Completer	1,386	40.7%	477	37.9%	1,863	40%

**Table A9: Probation violations, recidivism, and a new status offense**

	<b>Boys (n= 3,402)</b>		<b>Girls (n=1,257)</b>		<b>TOTAL (n=4,659)</b>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>New delinquent offense</b>	1,660	48.8%	606	48.2%	2,266	48.6%
<b>Days until delinquent act (n=2,266)</b>						
Less than one month	401	24.2%	128	21.1%	529	23.3%
1-3 months	419	25.2%	172	28.4%	591	26.1%
3.1- 6 months	350	21.1%	130	21.5%	480	21.2%
6.1 months to 1 years	325	19.6%	118	19.5%	443	19.5%
More than a year	158	9.9%	58	9.6%	223	9.8%
<b>Number of delinquent acts (n=2,266)</b>						
1-2	401	24.2%	159	26.2%	560	24.7%
3-5	417	25.1%	180	29.7%	597	26.3%
6-10	370	22.3%	145	23.9%	515	22.7%
11 or more	472	28.4%	122	20.1%	594	26.2%
<b>Probation violations</b>	420	12.3%	174	13.8%	594	12.7%
<b>Days until first probation violation (n=594)</b>						
Less than one month	55	13.1%	20	11.5%	75	12.6%
1-3 months	89	21.2%	41	23.6%	130	21.9%
3.1- 6 months	105	25%	33	19%	138	23.2%
6.1 months to 1 years	116	27.6%	55	31.6%	171	28.8%
More than a year	55	13.1%	25	14.4%	80	13.5%
<b>Number of probation violations (n=594)</b>						
1-2	261	62.1%	95	54.6%	356	59.9%
3-5	116	27.6%	59	33.9%	175	29.5%
6 or more	43	10.2%	20	11.5%	63	10.6%
<b>New status offense</b>	400	11.8%	182	14.5%	582	12.5%
<b>Days until first status offense (n=582)</b>						
Less than one month	21	5.3%	14	7.7%	35	6.9%
1-3 months	51	12.8%	24	13.2%	75	12.9%
3.1- 6 months	69	17.3%	42	23.1%	111	19.1%
6.1 months to 1 years	157	39.3%	60	33%	217	37.3%
More than a year	102	25.5%	42	23.1%	144	24.7%
<b>Number of status offenses (n=582)</b>						
1	345	86.3%	147	80.8%	492	84.5%
2 or more	55	13.8%	35	19.2%	90	15.5%